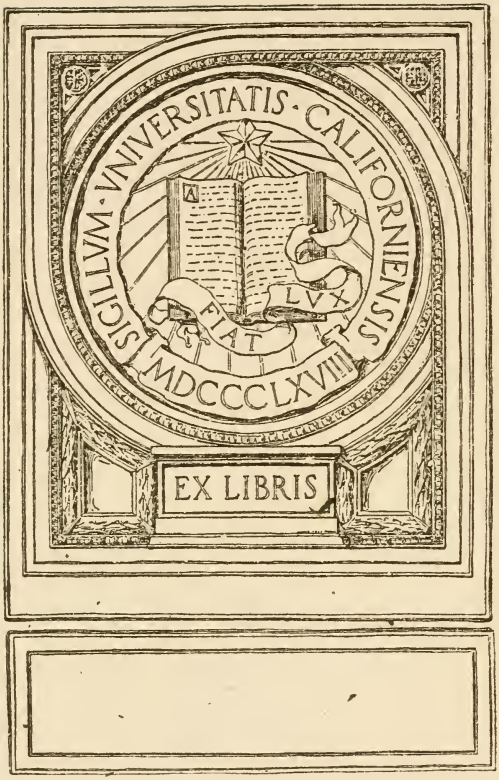
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TWENTY YEARS IN THE NEAR EAST

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TWENTY YEARS IN THE NEAR EAST

BY

ARDERN G. HULME-BEAMAN

LATE OF THE LEVANT CONSULAR SERVICE

METHUEN & CO.
36 ESSEX STREET, W.C.
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1898

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A. M. C.

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TWENTY YEARS IN THE NEAR EAST

CHAPTER I

PERHAPS the most interesting of all autobiographies is that of Jean Jacques Rousseau, and the charm of it lies in the inimitable naïveté with which the author lays bare all his little vanities and conceits to the reader, compelling curiosity from the growing intimacy he establishes with himself. In the following pages I do not wish in any degree to follow his distinguished example, but this first chapter will be in a measure devoted to an attempt at introducing the writer to those who may have patience to read a few of his adventures, and thus enabling them, perhaps, the better to understand and participate therein. If the "Ego" is sometimes too obtrusive, I can only plead that no more convenient method suggested itself for stringing together the various incidents and observations presented, and remark that the critic can always substitute Tom, Dick, or Harry, without in any way detracting from any force or sense they may possess. With this apology, I throw myself on public mercy, and proceed to unfold my tale.

After spending my younger days, in the fashion of English boys, more in sport than study, I entered for an examination, and somewhat to my astonishment, was informed of my appointment as Student Interpreter attached to the Embassy at Constantinople. We all went out in the same steamer from Marseilles: Mr. Block, C.M.G., now First Dragoman of the same Embassy; Mr. Eyres,

Consul, also at Constantinople; Mr. Richards, the victim of the recent outrage at Jeddah, now Consul at Damascus; Mr. Barnham, C.M.G., our respresentative at Aleppo; Mr. Alvarez, in the same capacity at Benghazi; and myself.

On arriving we were at first lodged at the old Missirie's hotel for a few days before taking possession of the school at Ortakeui. I had scarcely been twenty-four hours in the place before I was arrested and introduced to various "karakols," or guardhouses, my offence being that I carried a revolver in my pocket. How the fact was discovered I cannot imagine, but I was simultaneously seized by three policemen, and hauled off most ignominiously. At last, on arriving at Galata Serai, I succeeded in inducing the officer in charge to send over to the Embassy, and of course my detention at once ceased, with many apologies.

The school was a rickety old wooden house, with an uncared-for garden in three terraces, one of which we quickly converted into a lawn tennis court, and a very airy shed dignified with the name of stables.

Here we soon shook down and commenced our Oriental studies. For Turkish we had a young Armenian Professor at first, who was afterwards changed for Costaki Bey Pangiris, then an aide-de-camp of the Sultan, and now at Rome in a diplomatic capacity. We were taught Greek by M. Maliakas, and I was initiated into the rudiments of Arabic and Persian by a reverend old Persian Hodja, named Habib Effendi. I cannot say, however, that I learnt much from him, except some tricks at chess, which he played like a true master; in fact, at least three-quarters of every supposed hour's lesson went in games and problems on the board.

But if our masters did not teach us very much, we made rapid progress on our own account by spending most of our time either in converse with our neighbours, or else in scouring the country round and chattering with all and sundry whom we came across.

About once in every week or ten days our "superintendent," Sir W. Baring, used to pay us a visit, and, I fear, did not altogether approve of our casual mode of "reading,"

but the final result proved that we had taken the best course, for when the examinations came off, we satisfied everybody, and, with the exception perhaps of the writer, I do not think the Foreign Office has ever had any reason to complain of its first batch of Student Dragomans.

This was in 1878, during the Russo-Turkish War, and when in February the British Fleet was brought up the Dardanelles to prevent the Russian entry by land, its advent was, of course, the signal for an orgie of dances, and later on of cricket, football, regattas, etc. Afterwards some Athletic Sports were organised, the entries for which were confined to members of the Fleet and Embassy, and we six young students from Ortakeui were indulgently included with the idea merely of swelling the lists. So sure were the originators, however, of their prowess, that for several events the supposed winners were allowed to choose their own prizes. The result showed that they had been somewhat premature, as the "Unknowns" carried off every first and second prize, with the exception of the Quarter Mile Cup, given by Lady Layard, who particularly begged me to stand out, since it was evident that at that time I could easily have conceded fifty yards' start to anybody on the ground. Our victory was well celebrated at Ortakeui, and the sports were followed by a ball; but, after dancing all night, I was seized next morning with hæmorrhage from the lungs, and gradually went from bad to worse. To cut a long story short, I finally lay for a month in hospital, after losing nine pounds of blood, and the lately triumphant athlete was carried out of it up to the kindly house of Mr. Donald at Candilli, as weak as a baby. There I was carefully and affectionately nursed; but as autumn came on, the doctors advised my removal to Egypt. The Foreign Office put no obstacles in the way, and attached me nominally to the staff of Mr. Vivian. Again I was carried on board the steamer, and on shore at Alexandria, till finally deposited, a mere shadow, in the Hotel du Nil at Cairo. Pitying glances from the groups lounging about the beautiful garden greeted the new arrival, and doubtless

frequent guesses were made as to how many weeks he could last. There had, however, been no recurrence of blood-spitting for three months, and, if I was nearly transparent, I cannot say I ever felt in any immediate danger of death. My first sojourn in the land of Egypt was the beginning of a totally new existence. Hitherto I had been passionately devoted to field sports of every kind, and mixed principally with those of kindred tastes. At the hotel I found a society of serious and cultured men and women, whose conversation was in itself a liberal education. I need only mention the late Dr. Appleton of the *Academy*, Mr. Flinders Petrie, Mr. Davidson of Baliol, the Rev. W. J. Loftie of the Savoy Chapel, and Professor Robertson Smith. All of these encouraged me to the utmost in a tenacious grip on life, and in a groping for entry into the world of thought and letters. It was now that I commenced writing articles for the *Saturday Review*, by the courtesy of whose proprietors I have been permitted to use them in part in the present work. Very slowly, in the lazy calm of Cairo, and basking in Egyptian sunshine, some of my lost strength crept back to me, and by degrees I was promoted from strolling up and down the balconies to occasional stretches in the Mooskee and prowls through the bazaars. Then a great project was mooted by Professor Robertson Smith for a trip up the Nile in a dahabeeyah. He himself had come out chiefly with a view to acquiring a knowledge of colloquial Arabic, and as this was also a desideratum with me, we had an object in common. We had also, I imagine, a common tie in the exiguity of our purses. The Professor, however, managed to secure the loan of a boat from the Mudir of Sioot, and we had only to pay the wages of the crew, amounting in all to about ten or twelve pounds a month. As the third of our party we had the young Laird Campbell of Argyll, and a more incongruous trio it would have been hard to put together. We had no dragoman, and managed our own affairs as best we could, which was very badly at the outset; but as we grew more familiar with the language and ways of our crew we

settled down into comparative if not very positive comfort. Before we had been a fortnight on the Nile the magic climate showed its effect, and I was able to handle a gun and help to fill our pot with quail and pigeons; and whilst the Professor explored tombs and temples, Campbell and I generally wandered in the maize and *berseem* fields in search of something to kill. This was before the days of Cook's stern-wheelers and quasi monopoly even of dahabeeyahs, and except for an occasional party of other similar lotus-eaters, we had the grand old river almost to ourselves. So much has, however, been written about Nile voyages, that I need only add that our own most delightful journey cost no more than about fifteen or sixteen pounds apiece for over two months of the most glorious time imaginable. There was, nevertheless, an unfortunate drawback in my case, since from carelessness in the matter of broad-brimmed hats, I contracted a virulent form of ophthalmia. Boracic acid was not then known, and on my return I was obliged to pass several weeks in a dark room, thus counteracting largely the benefits of the trip, besides permanently shortening my sight. With the spring, warm weather set in, accompanied by the stifling Khamseen winds, and again the invalid was reduced to the last stage of exhaustion. It was in vain that the best doctors were consulted: no two agreed in their treatment. One insisted on spray treatment for the throat to stop the wretched cough, another was for bolstering up the system at all hazards, whilst a third was in favour of reductive measures to check the too violent heart action which threatened another rupture of the scarcely healed veins. Finally, Dr. Sachs, the Khedive's physician, wrapped me for severals hours a day in blankets filled with crushed ice, and nearly succeeded in extinguishing the little vitality left in my carcase. At length, in desperation, I resolved to return to cooler climes, and in June re-embarked for Constantinople. From that day I began to mend, and horse exercise in Syria went far to complete the cure. Not one of my medical advisers expected me to live

three months, and told me so plainly, at my own request for their true opinion. Yet that was now nearly twenty years ago, and anybody who wades through this book will see that I have scarcely kept to a valetudinarian régime since. I have only given this sketch of a severe illness in the hopes of encouraging other similar sufferers never to lose heart, but to remember that while there is life, and the will to live, one should never despair.

The next four or five months were devoted to studying for the final examination, and at the end of the year I was promoted to be a full-fledged Consular Assistant, in which capacity I was appointed to Beyrout. There I had as my Chief, Mr. Eldridge, as Consul-General, with Mr. Dickson as Vice-Consul. The former was already growing old, and was very broken in health, so that my advent enabled him to hand over his charge to Mr. Dickson, whilst I was forthwith named Acting Vice-Consul, to which office appertained also the duties of Judge of the Consular Court. Mr. Dickson was extremely easy-going, and was very glad, probably, to be relieved of the routine of the Vice-Consulate in exchange for the comparatively idle but superior post of Consul-General. The change suited all of us admirably, but was scarcely equally relished by the individuals who had to make official acquaintance with the new broom. At this time Cyprus had not long been occupied by the British, but had already become the asylum of a crew of adventurers, many of whom were swiftly pursued by writs from the King's Bench. These gentlemen usually fled before them, either to Smyrna or Beyrout, and it became an amusing and exciting part of my duties to lay violent hands on them when practicable. Many were the curious characters whom I thus came across. I remember one refugee, who passed as an Indian Army colonel on furlough, enjoying himself with some of the best shooting in the world at Mirsina with a pack of hounds. On receiving the order to arrest him, I instructed our Consular Agent at that post to do so, but he comically replied that he simply dared not venture to interfere with so aristocratic an offender.

A cargo of cartridges and other goods having arrived at Beyrout for "the Colonel," he was invited by me to come down and clear them, and was much hurt at being promptly collared on the landing-stage. He was "a member of Boodle's Club, sir!" and I should find "what a deuce of a mistake I was making," with much more of the same sort; but I inexorably ushered him towards the small cupboard in the Consulate which then served, and for all I know, still does, as a prison, and advised him to take things easily. He laid an action against me, I heard later, for false imprisonment, with damages at five pounds a day, or hour, I forget which; but it availed him little, as after shipping him for England I heard no more of my gallant but irate prisoner.

Another curious case, though of a dissimilar nature, was that of Nazik Tershaneh. One day an old man entered the Consulate and prayed for a private audience. He declared he had been robbed of a wife, graceful as a gazelle and lovely as a star, and sought protection to enable him to recover her. The mere fact of a Moslem approaching a foreign Vice-Consul on such a subject was suspicious; but I consented, at least, to listen to his tale. The story told me, later on, by the girl herself, in voluble and picturesque Turkish, was this.

She was now fifteen years of age, and had been married at Widdin, in Bulgaria, eighteen months ago, to Abdullah Zebedani, the old man, at least sixty, who was a Customs officer at Alexandria. He came to Syria, and left her with an old woman, a certain Hadji Fatmeh el Missrieh ("*Keur olsun!*"—"May she go blind!" remarked the fair one, in a parenthesis), and went himself to Damascus. After a little while, she was told she had been sold, and was forcibly sent to the house of one, Selim Shukri, who already owned four wives, and with whom she stayed twenty-five days. On her husband's return, she was sent back to the house of Fatmeh, where he picked her up again. Selim, however, appeared to claim her, took her away, *vi et armis*, and maltreated old Abdullah. He had complained to the authorities, but as Shukri was rich he had no great hopes

of redress, wherefore he had come to me. It was really no business of the British Vice-Consul, but as being apparently a contravention of the Slave Trade Convention, and altogether rather a scandalous proceeding, I wrote to the authorities, and in the afternoon went to see the Governor, and suggested the propriety of setting Nazik free. About six o'clock the ill-assorted couple came together to visit me, and after profusely thanking me, Abdullah stated that the lady had a communication to make, and discreetly retired into the next room. The beauteous Nazik, who truly was exceeding fair to see, then threw off her veil, and passionately recited the foregoing tale, with many additional facts and comments, concluding by expressing a wish, then and there, to enter my service as maid. This offer I was obliged reluctantly to decline, as the obdurate Shukri had summoned them both to appear next morning in court for side issues to be tried, and I did not wish to be further mixed up in the dispute. The two questions posed were :—First, Had Abdullah sold his wife to Shukri? and secondly, Had Shukri beaten Abdullah?

The court was crowded with the cream of native society, and in support of his claim to the girl Shukri produced a deed of sale with Abdullah's seal duly affixed. He further brought four other "men about town" to swear that Nazik had been offered to them for sums from £100 downwards (Selim had paid £40). Abdullah denied the evidence *in toto*, and swore his seal had been stolen. By Moslem law, if Abdullah had sold his lawful wife, he thereby incurred the death penalty, and if he had sold her as a slave and she claimed her liberty, he would have to refund the £40, which he evidently had no wish to do. As the Moslem Code does not accept a sealed document without corroborative evidence, Abdullah's denial upon oath put the *onus probandi* on the other party. They then swore that Abdullah had offered to bring other girls as pretty from Stamboul to order, and asked, if Nazik had been his honest wife, would he ever have left her with a woman of the known character of Hadji Fatmeh?

Abdullah's reply to this was that he had only expected to

be away for a day or two, and Nazik swore she had seen none of the four witnesses before the previous day, when they had come with Fatmeh, and by threats and cajolery had tried to persuade her to say that she was not Abdullah's wife. Her version was that Fatmeh had hired her out for the period that her husband was away, and in support of this she adduced the fact of her being returned on the day Abdullah was expected from Damascus.

After some more hard swearing, the unusual course was taken of Nazik's unveiling before her judges, and her surprising beauty probably produced its effect, as at the close of the case complicity between Abdullah and Fatmeh was considered proved, but Shukri was acquitted of all blame. As a matter of fact, if he had bought such a fine young Circassian in the open market, he would have had to pay £60 at the very least for her, whereas, from other evidence, it appeared doubtful if he had really given more than £15. If he bought her at all, he either did so from the woman knowing her to have been stolen, or from the man being aware that she was his wife, or that she was not his to dispose of. Probably the actual bargain was that he took her for a few days from Fatmeh for a small sum, on the understanding that he would give her up if the title was disputed, relying upon Abdullah's being ashamed to bring up the case. That night the wretched old man spent in prison, but next day he was released, and he and his wife immediately implored my protection against the powerful enemies they had now made. I advised them to leave Syria as quickly as possible, but they begged to dwell under the shadow of the Vice-Consul so hard, that at last I agreed to install him as gardener in a small place I had on the outskirts of the town, and I never heard of any further molestation being offered him. Now and again the divine Nazik would bring me vegetables and fruit, or come for the month's wages, and dutifully kiss the hand of "her father"; but I seldom, if ever, saw the old rascal again.

I believe that Beyrout has now become quite a fashionable centre, threatening to rival even Smyrna in the smartness of its race-meetings and other amusements,

but *Consule Beamano* it was a very sleepy, behind-the-age town. There was nothing whatever in the shape of a theatre or other public place of diversion—only a rudimentary attempt at a lawn tennis court, very poor shops, with stock-in-trade dating from almost prehistoric times, and no society to speak of outside the missionary element. Nevertheless, the Beyroutines used to be, and now are probably still more, pleased with themselves and their surroundings, and nobody can live long in the place without growing fond of it, in spite of all its shortcomings and disadvantages.

In the spring it is a pleasant residence; but as the summer advances Beyrout becomes intolerable. The heat gathers itself all day on the mountains which surround the bay, and descends in a stifling smother at night. After roasting from dawn to sunset, darkness brings with it no relief, but only a natural Turkish bath, enlivened by myriads of mosquitoes and sandflies. Everybody consequently flies to the Lebanon villages for coolth, as there are about half a dozen within fairly easy distance. Aleih rules the roost with its European hotel and rich missionary *clientèle*; but there are also Shemlane, Areyah, Beit Mary, Aytab, and Sook el Gharb. Beit Mary used to be the headquarters of the French, and enjoys the advantage of a certain amount of shade from its pine forests, although a pine or fir is not altogether a satisfactory shade-thrower, and trees also generally bring mosquitoes, whilst Aleih is almost free from these plaguy insects, except such as are brought up in the market-basket daily from Beyrout.

As soon as the season for villegiatura was at hand, I chose Areyah in preference to the more fashionable resorts, moved also by the consideration of a very desirable little villa being to let by chance, as the gentleman who built it was away. It was the only European residence in or rather near the village, and stood in its own grounds, overlooking the diligence road, so that letters and telegrams could be dropped and taken up most conveniently. It also was comfortably furnished

with decent fittings, and was considered the most luxurious house on the mountain. It was impossible for me to pay the rent demanded for this little palace, so I asked some friends from England to come out and try a month or two's picnic, and I think we all enjoyed ourselves hugely, notwithstanding minor trials in the shape of insects of all sorts, native servants,[1] and jackals.

One of the greatest pests was the sparrow. These birds congregated in the creepers round the house, and before day broke began such a concert of twittering that sleep was henceforth impossible, and all efforts to dislodge them were futile to the end. Of nature's music there was never any lack, the tree-crickets keeping up a deafening sibilation all day, and at sunset the nightingales and frogs took up the chorus, aided by the demoniacal howls of the jackals. These brutes invaded the villa nightly, and stole everything that was not carefully locked up; and though I several times sat up for them with a gun, and once nearly blew the lintel off the back door in a shot at a grey shadow slipping out after a raid on the milk-jug, I never succeeded in killing one. During the summer I made several short excursions in the Lebanon, simply hiring the first pony offered to me, at the rate of about five shillings a day, and I found them such useful beasts that it was not worth while to buy a horse of my own. As an example of what they can do, I once had occasion to forward despatches to Damascus. The road was blocked with snow, and the diligence was not running. Generally I would send my Druse boy, Youssef, on foot, but this time I went to the nearest stable and asked the owner for a pony to take me to Damascus. He pointed to three, and said that any of them would do. Starting very early on a cold morning, we reached Shtora, in the Buka'a plain, about noon, having meanwhile crossed the Lebanon

[1] Our maid, Emineh, was a fat pudding of a girl, strongly recommended from one of the missionary schools. An idea of her intelligence can be gathered from her reply to a question of what her estimate was of heaven and hell: "Heaven would be nicest from May to August, but hell would be warmer, I think, in the winter."

at a height of about eight thousand feet, and for several kilometres having had literally to plough through the snow up to the girths. On arriving at Shtora, our nether limbs were caked in first melted and then frozen snow; but after cracking and thawing it off, and a brief rest and snack, we started again. We soon had to climb the Anti-Lebanon, about another six thousand feet, and thence descending into the green valley of the Barada, trotted gaily into Damascus soon after sundown, doing the whole distance of one hundred and twenty-five kilometres in about fourteen hours. After a day's stable, the pony took me back just as easily.

At this time Rustem Pasha, Governor of the Lebanon, possessed an ambling mule which was popularly credited with being able comfortably to race and beat the diligence over the same distance. As the coach was drawn by teams of four and six, changed every ten or twelve kilometres, and used to gallop fast across the plain, this was a pretty good performance, which, however, there was no reason to doubt, as besides the Pasha's word for it, I myself have seen the mule going up and down the road at a pace quite equal to his reputation.

I once made a journey myself on a mule, but only once. I had heard that some pieces of statuary had been found at Afka, and thought I would try and do a little digging on my own account. Excavation in search of *antiquas* was forbidden, but I fancied, as a Vice-Consul, I might perhaps be able to manage it. The road to Afka lies past the Dog River, and over one of the steepest of the Lebanon passes, called Dahr ed Dahab, which I was told no horse could negotiate. Accordingly I mounted my Druse boy, Youssef, and myself on a couple of strong mules, and off we went, with our blankets strapped behind us. On reaching the redoubtable pass, we were puzzling over half a score of rude tracks when a young Metuali came up on a weedy chestnut nag and offered to show us the way. Before going far, though, I preferred to dismount and continue the climb on foot, much as I disliked and suffered from clambering uphill. The mules were

slipping in all directions on the huge slanting polished slabs of rock which constituted the path; but the native pony scrambled like a cat from bottom to top. From that day onward I never again discarded a horse for a mule on the popular delusion of their superior sure-footedness. Next morning my mule suddenly pricked up his ears, and refused to budge an inch in a most awkward spot, where the track was not a yard wide, with a wall of rock on the right and a yawning chasm on the left. After a while he incontinently set off at headlong speed, and all attempts then to check him were as unavailing as previous ones had been to make him move. The brute had caught sight of two peaceable bears, at least half a mile away, eating strawberries amongst the bushes. When at length I pulled him up, or rather, when he chose to pull up, for nobody can stop a mule who wishes to go on, I jumped off, cut a leathery twig, and administered punishment. He took this very badly, and was both vicious and sulky the rest of the day. As it was a fine night, we rode on by the stars, and when it grew cold I threw the blanket over my shoulders, tucked it under my seat, and so rocking along, ended by falling asleep. No sooner, however, did the mule discover this than he gave a couple of "bucks," and depositing me on mother earth, took to his heels. The next village we came to I sent for a horse; but this little incident may put others on their guard against mules, which are of all such cattle the most revengeful, ill-tempered, and generally unsatisfactory.

As far as my amateur excavation went, the trip was not a success, for I had scarcely camped under the spreading fig-trees whose roots are bedded in the old Temple of Venus, before a *posse* of Lebanon gendarmes warned me off. This was only one of several similar excursions; and one or two of the summer months spent in prowling over the north Lebanon might well tempt some of our *blase* tourists. The scenery is wild, and often of striking beauty, whilst the country teems with remains of the highest archæological interest, which have as yet been but meagrely

examined. Amongst other enigmas, the excursionist can exercise his ingenuity on the old rock inscription, "ARBORUM QUATUOR GENERA CETERA PRIVATUR," which occurs more than a hundred times. There are many others, too, in the Kessrouan, which seem to have escaped Renan and his brother-explorers. From Afka to Byblos, along the course of the Nahr Ibrahim, or River of Adonis, the land still preserves many relics of the cult of the favourite of Aphrodite, and those at Afka itself and at El Ghineh are comparatively little known. At the former spot are the dismantled and overgrown remains of what must once have been a magnificent temple to the Goddess of Beauty, destroyed by the Christian emperors for the debaucheries which disgraced it. When I visited it in 1880, a considerable portion was still in perfect preservation, and if the fallen roof and layers of earth and sand were cleared away, a beautiful monument of the past might be revealed to us. Its site is most picturesque, and the dismantled columns are framed in cypress groves, with spreading walnuts at its porches, and a sparkling, foaming river sixty feet below. This stream breaks out of the grotto over against the temple, in winter, in seven noisy cascades, but in summer with diminished volume. According to the legend, it runs red with the blood of Tammûz, or Adonis, which flows afresh every succeeding autumn; but in reality the water, being chalybeate, colours the stones in its bed permanently, though the first rains bringing down the red earth may give a deeper tint to it at that season. The grotto from which it springs is another natural wonder, which has not yet been adequately explored. It contains scores of low passages, widening here and there into spacious caves roofed with glistening stalactites, and floored with fossil remains and growing stalagmites. The neighbouring villagers told me, and professed to believe, that deep in the heart of the hill were once populous bazaars, but seeing that in winter all entrance and egress is blocked by the torrents, this can only be a fable. At anyrate, an hour's creeping by torchlight through the cavernous windings failed to show me

either traces of human habitation or end to the cave. Another noticeable fact in connection with this river is that it rises in a marsh, some thirty miles off, to disappear into the bowels of the earth, before issuing forth again at Afka. This has been proved by sending bottles and other objects by its subterranean channel.

The surrounding districts are mostly inhabited by the Metuali, a curious race, which is so little known that I may perhaps be excused for quoting some remarks written at that time in the pages of the *Saturday Review*.

"Besides pastoral and agricultural pursuits, few or no industries appear to exist among the Metuali. Every man is his own mason, carpenter, joiner, and tailor. The houses are very roughly thrown together, built of lime-stone hewn out of the ground, if not picked off its surface, each piece being piled on as it happens best to fit into the angles left by its predecessors. Inside, the walls are plastered with a composition of mud, lime, and straw, and the door generally boasts a couple of supporting posts, on the tops of which the largest stone in the building is laid crosswise. The windows are merely left out in the course of construction, and in their place are a few pieces of plank nailed together with the idea of fostering a delusion that the weather can be kept out at night. The dwellings of rich and poor differ but slightly, only that the former will perhaps have frescoed figures daubed on the wall in red and blue paint, and a trestle or two, on which a mattress makes apology for a divan. As a rule, they are all cleanly to look at, though experience will possibly force the traveller of to-day to complain, like his first forerunners, 'De la grande planté de mousches, et de puces grans et grosses qui estoient dans l'ost.' Household utensils are few and primitive. The *batterie de cuisine* is inexpensive, consisting in four bricks and a dozen iron spits, with perhaps a universal saucepan. A flea-brush, made of the twigs of a sticky plant, stands facing a red jar, containing the day's water supply, in the opposite corner, and the furniture is complete. For visitors a table of a foot high may be produced and a mat unrolled, but such a display

is extraordinary, and chairs do not enter into the compass of imagination at any time. For out-of-door work, all implements that will admit of it are made of wood, most deftly fashioned. In dress the Metuali are as modest as in their other surroundings. That of the women is simple, and does not give much scope to vanity. It consists in a bodice cut very low and very narrow in front, and drawn in tight to the figure at the waist, while a skirt, generally of the same piece, covers a pair of ample trousers. Their head-dress is merely a coloured kerchief tied over and under the two plaits of hair which are allowed to hang down the back; and some wear curls on either side of the temples in imitation of the Bedouin girls. An amber or glass bead necklace, a brass ring, and a bracelet or two of debased silver, are the usual ornaments. Earrings are not very commonly to be seen. The costume of the men is more picturesque than that of their wives and sisters, and the grace with which these sons of the mountain carry themselves even in rags and tatters is surprising. No painter or sculptor need seek a finer model than a Metuali shepherd springing from rock to rock, and stopping now and again with upraised arm to recall his flock to their duty by voice and sure-aimed stones. They almost all dress alike in loose blue pantaloons tucked into huge knee-boots, made of half-tanned leather, and always used as protection against snakes. A variegated waistcoat will sometimes cover a shirt, and oftener do duty for one; while over all is the black-striped *abbas*, a heavy blanket-cloak, of no particular shape, which serves equally to guard against the heat and the cold. The head is protected by the becoming *kefia*, which is a square scarf made of silk or cotton, and bound over the forehead by a double coil of thick woollen rope dyed black, and sometimes as large as an inch in diameter. This coiffure, which will make an ugly man look well, is admirably adapted to set off the bronzed beauty of the mountaineers, who are, however, utterly indifferent to its ornamental virtues as compared to its comfort by day or night. The outfit is completed by the belt of many colours, holding the *galioon*,

or pipe, and the indispensable knife, with the addition sometimes of a pistol and brass shield-shaped cases for powder and shot.

"It is easily to be supposed that a life so rude as theirs leaves little time to the Metuali for the cultivation of the higher accomplishments. Not one in fifty of them can read or write, and a sharpened memory is the only account-book they can keep. To such a pitch is this faculty heightened in some instances as to be little short of marvellous. I remember the steward of a large estate who rendered his complicated accounts weekly without notes of any sort, and it was averred that he could recapitulate the items of any villager's debit and credit, together with the expenditure of his master's establishment, for the last ten years. They are quite aware of their want of mental training, and are ready to express shame when reminded of it; but they will always excuse themselves on the plea of no need existing to stimulate them towards bettering their education. Their amusements consist in the most primitive dancing and singing. The chant of the women is inferior in point of art even to that of the Ghawazeeyeh, but it is far sweeter, as they do not aim at the metallic nasal twang so much prized in Egypt. When singing in chorus, they trill a refrain to each verse very much in the style of a Swiss jodel, which has a pleasing effect, especially at night, when the facial exertions are not apparent. Their dance is of quite a rudimentary kind, and has neither grace nor quaintness to recommend it. Although, as a rule, no woman is allowed to dance in the presence even of her own husband, or indeed of any near male relative, the rule is not strictly observed, and we have seen man and wife perform their antics in company, notwithstanding, too, that he was a priest of his sect. The usual dance of the men is more grotesquely feeble than that of the women, and half a dozen mountaineers joining hands and stamping round a circle to the accompaniment of clapped hands is a ludicrous spectacle, to be compared to nothing but the gambols of tame bears, as we are accustomed to see them

swaying to the flute of the Savoyard. The enjoyment they themselves derive from the exercise is nevertheless unbounded, and in ten minutes they will work themselves up to a frenzy resembling that of the dervishes. Occasionally such a performance possesses an attraction in the person of a skilled piper, whose music is really good, when the listener, like Evelyn on hearing the Marseilles galley-slaves, will be astonished how he plays 'both loud and soft music very rarely.'

"Another amusement, which is at the same time an occupation, is the chase. Some of the farmers grow so fond of sport as entirely to neglect Ceres for Diana, and the grain ripens and falls ungarnered while the sportsman is skulking after partridges, or lying in wait for larger game in the forests. Here wolves and bears are to be found, but they are seldom killed, owing to the poor quality of the weapons and the toughness of the quarry. Not long ago a bear-hunt was successfully terminated after two days' hard work, and at the cost of a man's life, when the animal's skin was found to contain fifteen bullets —a result which would scarcely encourage future meddling with the destroyers of the maize crops. Most of the guns are single-barrelled, of prodigious length and of antique build, but notwithstanding their clumsiness and flint locks, a good shot rarely misses his aim with them. Like all other matters of Eastern life, the departure for the chase has its special formalities, and the distinction between the valediction addressed to a sportsman of repute and that to a novice must be strictly observed. The greatest insult that could be offered to the former would be to dismiss him with the words '*Neshoofuk*,' or, 'We shall see what you can do,' it being well known that he never returns empty-handed; and, on the contrary, by saying, '*Awwayduk*,' or 'According to your custom,' to a mediocre gun, we pay him the most delicate flattery imaginable. These small set modes of expression are innumerable, and make one of the greatest difficulties in the way of a foreigner's acquitting himself politely in Arab company. At the same time, it must be extremely convenient to a people of

limited ideas to have speech and answer apportioned out for every occurrence of daily life.

"Turning for a moment to the social relations of the Metuali, we remark that they are marred as usual by religious crotchets, though not to so great a degree as in the case of genuine Mohammedans of the true Shiite sect. The women are treated more as companions to the men than as toys or slaves, and, except at harvest-time, when they work hard in the fields, they busy themselves actively with domestic cares and with the housing of cattle and tending of poultry. Though the law does not hold the Metuali to monogamy, whether by poverty or by inclination, he usually restricts himself to one wife. She, in return, is generally very fond of him, and is perhaps a better wife than mother, which is not often the case under the Koranic dispensation. Many couples come together originally in virtue of the curious custom of the *Metn*, or law of possession, by which a father gives up his daughter for a term of years on payment of a sum fixed by written contract. At the expiration of the time the girl is returned, and, if her temporary owner has not been pleased with her, she is again in the market, either to re-enter into *Metn* or to be married. No stain whatever attaches to her. I knew of a case in which a man paid off a heavy mortgage by means of his three daughters, marrying them all well finally. Consequently, a Metuali father will mostly be better pleased to see himself blessed with handsome girls than with stalwart boys—another anomaly in the East. The results of this system, strangely enough, do not seem to be so prejudicial as might be supposed to the primitive society in which it is carried on; for it naturally happens, in the majority of cases, when a woman has borne children to a man which he must support, that he is not willing to repudiate her, but prefers to keep the mother with the family, and so the *Metn* becomes the preliminary to marriage."

Altogether I remained about a year at this my first post, the reason of my leaving being that my ideas of the position of a Vice-Consul differed slightly from those of

my colony. Under my benign predecessors the Colony (with a very big C) had grown to consider the consulate (with a little c) as a poor sort of Government article, to be used for its convenience, and at other times ignored. The Order in Council, which should be the Bible of British subjects in Turkey, it treated with contempt, and turned up its nose at the Registration and Fee Books. Perhaps from its own point of view it was right, but mine could scarcely be expected to coincide with theirs, and scarcely had the new man from Constantinople arrived when a vigorous series of reforms was enforced. One of the most difficult was to induce the more superior personages to admit that they were British subjects at all by registering themselves before the 31st of January. Failure to do so entailed a fine, which several contumaciously and openly declined to pay. This squabble grew very acrimonious, and at last I refused to have anything more to do with it, and left the issue of certificates to my Acting Chief, who for the sake of a quiet life winked at irregularities in high (Beyrout) places. Complaints against me, however, began to pour in, first to him and then to the Embassy at Constantinople; but as I was generally, if not invariably, well within the statutes, I could not be, and was not, blamed for seeing the dignity of the office upheld. In the end, though, the colony so far prevailed as to cause my transfer; but it did not gain much by the change. If I was sometimes *fortiter in re*, I was usually *suaviter in modo*, whereas my successor, Mr. Cameron, was a most excellent official, of whom anything might be said except that he was gentle-mannered. Not only did I succeed in arousing the evil tempers of the missionary and commercial communities, but I also fell foul of the Turkish authorities in rather an amusing manner. Rumours reached Beyrout that disturbances had occurred in the Ledja district, and I exuberantly telegraphed the fact *en clair* to the Embassy at Constantinople. It was altogether contrary to rule for the Vice-Consul to communicate at all with the Ambassador from a post where a Consul-

General resided, and furthermore the form of my message—"*Row in the Hauran—shall I go and inquire?*" gave great umbrage to the Porte. The Minister for Foreign Affairs at once addressed a remonstrance to the Embassy, firstly as to my wiring on such subjects except in cypher, and secondly on my proposing to inquire into a matter which did not touch British interests. I received a strong official reprimand for this despatch, which nevertheless immensely tickled the fancy of the Embassy, and did me no harm. On another occasion I visited Midhat Pasha, and instead of sitting decorously on the edge of my chair with folded hands and turned-in toes, as I ought to have done, I took an easy seat, crossed my legs, and lit a cigarette. This was likewise made the ground of a report upon the abominable impudence of the new Vice-Consul, which shows what little things can occupy great minds. I had my revenge, however, subsequently, when poor Midhat Pasha was under sentence of exile to Taïf. He arrived at Beyrout on his last journey, and was left alone at the Governorate in an empty room with a sentinel at the door. Not a soul dared to approach the fallen Pasha, long the first man in Turkey. He was very glad then to see a European face, and besought me to interfere and prevent his being taken on board, as he had a presentiment that he would be thrown into the sea even before reaching Smyrna. I had, however, already had enough of meddling with what did not concern me, and could only condole with him on what we both knew very well was the fate in store for him.

As one who, besides having himself been a member of it, has seen a great deal of the working of our Levant Consular Service, I should like to put on record a few observations which everybody with an equal acquaintance with its officers will certainly endorse, though they seldom have an opportunity of making them public.

The idea of training up student dragomans for occupying Consular posts was an excellent one, but it has been carried out in a very spasmodic and irregular manner. At first the men were chosen by competitive examination

in England, and brought out to Constantinople, where they were lodged at Ortakeui, a village on the Bosphorus. There they were instructed by visiting and resident professors, and were in daily contact with Eastern life and languages at every turn and every hour. The result was that after a year they were tolerably fluent in the speech of the people, had made friends in all directions in both foreign and Turkish society, had seen a fair amount of the modes of Ottoman administration, and were already fitted for any commencing duties which might be allotted to them. Nowadays, after passing the preliminary examination, the students are sent to Oxford to complete their studies. It is possible that they may there learn Turkish and Arabic, much as we learn Latin and Greek at school, but they arrive at the end of two years on the scene of their future labours as innocent as infants of the duties of a Vice-Consul. All the first batch of student dragomans were on completion of their course immediately drafted to more or less important posts, whereas it would be manifestly absurd to send a man straight from college to Asia Minor or Macedonia. Consequently, they have still at least another year's practice before them before they are good for any independent responsible work, and even that year is not spent in Oriental surroundings, but amongst British officials generally.

It can only be hoped that before long we may adopt the better system, pursued by Austria and Russia, of making the Consular and Diplomatic Services interchangeable. The best training for a Minister or Ambassador would be the Consular grades, and from the moment that the Consular Service is entered by a far stiffer test than the Diplomatic, there can be no reason for closing the higher places of diplomacy against Consuls and Consuls-General, who in many cases would be infinitely better qualified to serve the best interests of England, from their enormously superior experience and actual knowledge, than those who obtain them by a slow apprenticeship, employed mostly in amusing themselves, and in copying and docketing the despatches of the very Consuls who are not counted worthy of their just reward.

CHAPTER II

AFTER a year or so of Beyrout, I was by no means sorry to be transferred to Damascus, where there was only a Vice-Consulate and very little work to do. I therefore relapsed again into the condition of a simple Consular Assistant, and was instructed to perfect myself in the language and manners and customs of the people. Mr. Jago was at that time Vice-Consul, and as he had no need of my services I scarcely ever set foot in the Consulate during the whole of my stay. On the other hand, I lost no opportunity of improving my acquaintance with Arabic and the Arabs, and the first step I took was to hire a small house, far away from the most fashionable part of the city, close to the Eastern Gate. Many were the dire prophecies pronounced as to the dangers I was incurring of being robbed and murdered, but as I possessed nothing worth stealing, I could afford to run the risk. The house was, in fact, broken into one night, and a desk abstracted containing a few private papers and some arsenic pills, which probably brought their own retribution to the burglars. My new abode was approached through the usual massive gate, opening with a gigantic wooden key, in the centre of which large gate was the small one, the "needle's eye" of Scripture, through which, certainly, no camel could ever pass. On the right in entering were the stables, and adjoining them two or three small rooms intended as a harem; and on the left a marble-floored drawing-room, with a perpetual fountain playing in the centre, and over this, led up to by a ladder, a low sleeping-room.

Between the two portions of the dwelling was a roomy courtyard, also with its fountain, and behind was an orchard full of fruit trees. The floors were of mud cement

cleanly whitewashed, and a nicer little den nobody need require. The rent for the whole, if I remember rightly, was three napoleons a month. I left my Druse boy, Youssef, behind in Beyrout, as I did not care for his quarrelsome temper, and engaged a Damascene, Abdou by name, who was quite capable of ministering to my small wants. After furnishing in frugal Arab style, with a few divans for the sitting-room, and a couple of mattresses for the loft, which was not large enough to hold a bedstead, I proceeded to fit myself out in the orthodox costume, and during most of my residence I dressed like my neighbours, in loose flowing burnous and *Keffieh* head-dress, except when going out in the evening to the whist parties which took place several nights a week at the houses of Mr. Jago, Col. Useletti the Spanish, Count Positano the Italian, and other Consular representatives.

Next door to me lived Lady Digby, whose romantic story had interested me long before I ever dreamed of seeing the heroine. This lady had been in her day one of the reigning beauties and wits of Europe. She first married Lord Ellenborough, but separating from him, espoused an Austrian nobleman, by whom she had a son, now holding high rank in the army of the monarchy. After a life of much adventure, she happened to find herself in Syria, and insisted upon visiting Palmyra alone. The party was attacked by Bedouins, and some of them being about to offer violence to her person, a handsome young Sheikh threw himself before her, and vowed he would defend her with his life. Struck at once by his chivalry and manly beauty, the eccentric Englishwoman fell in love with her deliverer, and having exhausted all the varied pleasures of civilisation, she elected to cast in her lot with the Children of the Desert. She almost immediately married Sheikh Mijuel, of the then poor tribe of the Missrab, and for years lived the life of the Bedouins in their tents. With advancing age, however, she craved for more rest, and the house at Damascus was taken. Here she spent the remaining days of her life in devotion and charity, doing good alike to Moslems and

Christians, though she professed the Moslem faith, I believe, and frequently attended at the Mosque. She had always from girlhood been a most intrepid horsewoman, and to within a short while of her death would ride a great fiery white mare which was a handful for a strong man. Being still possessed of a certain income, her marriage quickly brought wealth to the Missrab tribe, which grew year by year in riches and importance, and proportionately revered the great lady who brought it fortune. Her husband must have been at least twenty years her junior, a man of medium height and expressive features, but taciturn and reserved, like all true Bedouins. To his credit be it said that he always treated Lady Digby with the greatest affection and respect, and her love for him was unbounded. On her dying bed she called for him, and begging him to give her his hand to hold, clasped it in her own, and so lay throughout the night, until she passed tranquilly away. Nothing ever gave me more pleasure during the first months of my residence than to drop in for a chat with my dear old neighbour. She could scarcely have been less than seventy years old, and her hair was white as silver, but still abundant. Her complexion, which had always been the wonder of society, seemed not to have suffered even from the desert sun, and was as delicate as a rose petal, whilst she had one of the most beautiful low voices and enchanting laughs imaginable. She was a good musician, and her water-colour sketches were superb. She was very fond, too, of all animals, and an excellent judge of horseflesh. It was through her that I was able to buy my mare, known over the whole desert as "Bint el Nejmeh," or "Daughter of the Star," from the white blaze on her forehead. She also presented me with two beautiful rough-coated shepherd dogs to guard my house after the burglary. These creatures always slept in the stable with the mare, who never lay down while in my possession, even after the hardest day. She suffered from windgall, but before she had been out an hour her legs would be as fine as a deer's. Dear old "Bint"! many a stretching gallop did I have on

her, racing the steeds of Bedouin camps I came across in my journeys, and she was seldom beaten, though about twenty years old. When I left, I sold her to Mr. Jago; but whether it was pining for her old master, or, what is more likely, for her canine friends, she refused all food the day she quitted me, and died of starvation—or a broken heart.

I had not been living very long at Damascus when I made the acquaintance of a fascinating young Arab widow. I forget the pretext on which she first visited me, but it was something connected with a lawsuit. She was a Christian, or pretended to be, though I have my doubts on this point on account of her extreme intimacy with the best Moslem society. She was wealthy and well educated, and a most agreeable companion for a young Vice-Consul anxious to acquaint himself with the manners and language of the country. She would frequently come and stay two or three days in the harem buildings, which she fitted up for herself, bringing a slave or two to minister to her wants. In the afternoon a hammock would be slung in the orchard under the peach-trees, and Jemileh would sit beside me reading the *Elf Leil ou Leileh*, or reciting poetry with a running explanatory comment, till I almost imagined myself an Eastern prince. Heigh! for the days when one was young! It may not have been strictly consonant with official tradition to have the flies kept off the British Vice-Consular person by a pretty little Syrian widow, but it was distinctly delightful, all the same. And then the high jinks we used to have in the evenings! when Jemileh would ask one or two of her lady friends, and, seizing her *'ood*, or lyre, would sing till we were tired of sitting and lying about, and afterwards set the example for a dance. But I daresay the reader would scarcely take the same pleasure as the actors used to do in these Oriental entertainments, which were nevertheless extremely interesting and instructive; and the only advice I can give any other young Englishman, who does not happen to be in the Service, and wishes to learn Arabic, is that he should try

and do likewise. He will be a lucky dog indeed if he finds a Jemileh to help him.

Damascus is one of the few places left where love-dramas of the old sort are still enacted almost daily. The reasons for this need not here be set down, but the fact remains. As a typical illustration, I may give a case which came under my own notice. In the goldsmith's bazaar was a handsome young fellow, named Abou Youssef. Besides his good looks, he was famed as an unrivalled songster. One day I left my watch-chain to be repaired, and calling for it afterwards, found the shop shut. My inquiries only elicited sly glances and much laughter. At last one of the neighbours said, 'Haven't you heard the story? Youssef, as you know, is a good-looking fellow, with a pretty talent for the *'ood* and for love-songs. Indeed, he is one of the best singers we have. Whilst he was at work the other day, accompanying his fingers with music like a bulbul its flight with song, two ladies stopped, and asked to look at some rings. It was necessary to try them on, and one of the Khanems showed a hand as white as snow, with lovely taper fingers, the sight of which, together with the sound of her voice, took away poor Youssef's senses all day, and his sleep all night. Next morning the same pair came again, and showed that they were as pleased with Youssef as he with them. Before leaving, they told him to bring some jewellery for them to see, to a house outside the town before you get to Dumeyr. Of course Youssef was like a drunken man for joy, and went off immediately, and spent all his spare money in a new silk vest, and in scents and perfumes. He then repaired to the Hammam, and was well washed and scrubbed—a trouble which he might have spared himself had he only known! Then he hired a horse, and started for the rendezvous. When he reached the place, the door was opened by an old woman, who bade him follow her, and he went straight up into the harem. There he put off his shoes at the threshold, and stepped in, full of shame and joy. However, the ladies soon put him at his

ease, and spread a table with a fine supper, and plenty of beer and wine, the like of which he had never tasted. When they had finished, being all hot with wine, they made Youssef take off his *gombaz*, which he was quite ready to do, so as to show his new silk shirt. They also loosened their girdles, and ordered an *'ood* to be brought, upon which they begged Youssef to play and sing, whilst they joined in the refrains. In the midst of it all, whilst he was wondering whether he was really awake or dreaming, there was a great shouting and noise below, and the ladies grew white and trembled, saying the Bey had arrived. Then they locked the door, blew out the lights, and told Youssef to jump out of the window if he wanted to save his life. But when he looked out he saw that it was high, and only led into an inner court, so he refused. But they promised they would provide for his escape if only he could leave the room, and so at last he commended himself to Allah and jumped, more from the great fear he had of the Bey, who was hammering at the panels and declaring that the man whose shoes he had found should die, than from any great hope of ultimate safety. However, his Kismet was good, and he did not hurt himself; but he heard loud screams from the harem, and was more terrified than ever. Then he heard the Bey go out and come towards the courtyard, so he rushed wildly into the first dark door he could find, and then he saw three or four large *zeers*, nearly as tall as a man, full of apricot molasses, each with its wooden cover on. So he hid himself behind one, and listened to the Bey, who was searching everywhere, till he finally called for lanterns. Then Youssef gave himself up for lost; but Allah sent him an inspiration, and he climbed inside one of the jars and put the cover on again. The Bey searched the whole cellar, and even struck the jars, but as they all gave out the sound of being full except one, that was the only one he examined; and there Youssef had to stay for more than two hours, till a black slave-girl came with a light and keys and let him out. He did not even wait to change, or to dry himself, but

fled back to the city. And when he knocked at the first gate the *ghafir* opened it, but ran away in fright at the sight of the wretched lover, who shone in the moonlight like a very Afreet, being covered from head to foot with the sticky bright molasses. But Youssef was too unhappy to upbraid him, and too ashamed to make himself known, so he did nothing but fly on with his bare feet. And everybody who saw him was afraid of him, so he got back all right at last, but he has been ill ever since!"

"And what became of the ladies?" I asked.

"Mashallah! of course I don't know actually, but it is said that when the Bey broke into the room, his favourite wife ran to meet him, and pretended to slip and sprain her ankle as she reached him, and so fell fainting and shrieking into his arms, which enraged him all the more, but still delayed him for a few moments. Afterwards he found out what had happened, and learned the incident of the treacle jar, which amused him so much that he pardoned the women, and only gave them each a good beating with sticks. At first he was going to kill the slaves who had been accomplices, but the Khanem interceded for them, and took the blame upon herself, when she saw the Bey relenting. He is a very good fellow, and she is a very clever woman, they say, so I suppose she made him eat a lot of lies, like all women do. It ended very luckily, though, for two or three of them might have been in Paradise by now."

"And how do you know all these particulars?"

"Oh, everybody knows these things, except just the few people who must be kept in the dark. The ladies go out and gossip, and the slaves too, and they hear and know all that their mistresses and each other do. Then they tell their friends, and so it comes round to all in time. My harem knew the whole story next day!"

I remember another case in which the fair culprits were brought before the Courts. The accused called several witnesses who were mixed up in the scandal. These latter insisted on speaking privately with the judges. What was not the astonishment of the officials in finding

their own relations and those of very high personages hid beneath the feridjees and yashmaks of the penitents!

Though it may seem paradoxical, some of the most delightful times I had at Damascus were spent outside it in gipsy-like wanderings. On these trips I would take very little impedimenta—the lightest of tents, a flannel shirt or two, with socks and a spare pair of boots, a little pillow to use with my saddle turned upside down, a medicinal bottle of brandy, the usual tooth-brush, and any odds and ends which suggested themselves. These all packed easily on a second horse, which my servant rode, whilst I went light on the "Bint el Nejmeh." I was perpetually starting off on jaunts of short duration, when I would generally leave the keys of my house either to Madame Jemileh or some neighbour, and in this way I scoured the whole country round. It is many years now since the Land of the Book has become a part of the regular Eastern tour. But there are plenty out-of-the-way nooks and corners in Syria still to all intents and purposes unexplored and virgin yet from the inquisitive eye of the tourist and the dominion of the dragoman. Leaving aside the rocky fastnesses of the Hauran, which have proved too much even for the zeal of the Ottoman Suzerain, or the ardour of Frenchmen in search of imaginary national interests to protect, there are villages and queer spots lying to the north and east of Damascus within easy reach of any traveller who is capable of conducting himself without personal supervision. Perhaps everyone would not enjoy a trip in this neighbourhood, but to him who travels in search of something new, and not merely to be able to say he has "been there," I venture to think few pleasanter fields offer than the hamlets which rest among the mountains between Damascus and Homs. There are certainly no hotels, no restaurants, no post, and—happy release!—no telegrams, but in exchange for the refinements of civilisation, a return to the customs and patriarchal hospitality of Abraham. You will have to forget spring mattresses and make friends with strange bedfellows as well as beds,

but you are no traveller if you complain at that. Water and milk instead of wine most of the time, but what water, and what milk! Or you can try John the Baptist's diet, for locusts are plentiful, and anyone who has tasted boiled locust-thighs, or sat down in the cool dawn to a dish of wild honey, dark and fragrant and running from the comb, will never think much of the asceticism of the early Bible dervish.

I should like to take you with me on some such journey, as it comes back to me now through the years—how I wish I were starting on it again to-morrow! I remember well riding out at sunrise from the Bab Tooma, or Gate of St. Thomas, the long swinging stride of the "Bint," and Abdou ambling behind with the tent. The sun was rising as we left the gardens and struck the plain of Aboon, tinting the red soil redder under the flying hoofs of the mare as she took her breather across it to the rocky gorge of Menin. Up this we scrambled over the wet stones, and then past the village of Mu'arraba on the left. All the houses are rectangular, and built with stone of the place, looking like a small toy townlet formed with multicoloured cards by ancient giants at play. Between it and the road are orchards laden with golden peaches and apricots, and on the right the quail are calling from the waving corn. Bright winged butterflies and burnished grasshoppers are fluttering and springing round us, and from the leafy shade bulbuls and turtle-doves are making love and plaint. By the hedge three men are loading a donkey with walnuts, and we stand aside to let a string of camels slope leisurely past in charge of swarthy Bedouins from the Eastern plains. Everyone we meet gives cheery greeting till we come to the Menin springs. Here, whilst the men are at work in the fields, the women-folk are engaged in the family washing. Being mostly Druses, the ladies are shy of showing their faces whilst—with washing-bats in one hand and a garment in the other—they stand bare-armed, up to the knees in the crystal water, thrashing out their linen. After washing their clothes, they perform the same

operation on themselves, and then run off, singing merrily, to their homes.

From Menin let us make for Sednaya, across a vast plain, partially cultivated, and iridescent with the most wonderful oranges, purples, and rose-madders. No pen can paint the gorgeous tints lent to the soil by the sunlight, and an artist who could set on canvas the Sednaya plain would be laughed at by those who have never seen such rich beauties. As we ride along, the people at work on the crops espy us from a mile or so distant, and race up to the travellers, holding out a little sheaf of barley or corn to the horses, and breathlessly exclaiming, "*Shemaletak*," or, "Your bouquet." This means that we must disburse *El 'adeh*—some infinitesimal copper coin—for the privilege of tasting the first-fruits, to the equal satisfaction of the natives and the beasts. Gradually the Convent of Sednaya looms up before us, built on the summit of a huge rock, with steps leading up to the low grated door, hewn like the doorway itself out of the living stone. Here lives, or lived in my time, a Lady Superior in charge of thirty novices. Sister Thecla and her lady secretary speak Greek, but Arabic is otherwise the only tongue heard within the walls. Once a year a pilgrimage is performed by the devout and the sick to the shrine of Our Lady of Sednaya, and as many as can be housed are received into the convent. The more wealthy mark their sense of the favours they receive by building or furnishing a guest-room; if not, by donations in money; and the poorer brethren come and depart freely. None of the ruder sex are allowed to live within the precincts; and, with the exception of the yearly pilgrims, very occasional travellers, and a most ancient priest, reputed long to have passed his fivescore years, no male loiters among the sisterhood.

When I visited Sednaya in 1880, our horses were quickly taken in charge by a girl groom, and a portress led me to the presence of Sister Thecla. Here I spent an hour in talk before attending vespers, which were repeated at a most prodigious pace by the secretary. As soon as these were over, a solitary dinner was served by a couple

of nuns, and I sat down to an excellent repast with some fine old wine from the convent cellars to help it down. After a quiet smoke on the roof I was led to my room, and left to myself with cordial "Good-nights."

Next day I spent in strolling about the convent and inspecting the quaint little chapel of St. George with its ever-burning lamp before the altar hung round with relics and votive offerings. I also had a long chat with the old priest, whose memory was beginning to fail, though he could recollect many events of the beginning of the century. Sister Thecla, too, treated me to marvellous stories of the cures effected at Sednaya, and appeared herself to be a firm believer in the truth of her tales. I had, too, to write my name,—the only English one, I think, in her book,—and it was with regret that at the second dawn I mounted the "Bint," whose eyes and nose had been carefully anointed with sweet oil against the cruel gadflies, and heard the gate swing to behind us as we rode away.[1]

A wide choice now lies before us,—like our first parents when Eden's doors were shut,—but let us bear away to the left across a desolate plain, peopled only by locusts, who apparently flourish well on a stone diet, and make for the village of Ma'aloola, lying partly in a valley and partly hewn into the breast of a mountain. Here, again, high up as in an eyrie, stands a monastery well worth the climb to reach, if only for the bottle of home-made wine which the fathers press on us. Ma'aloola claims to be one of the only two villages in the world where at the present time the old Syriac language is spoken in the market as the common dialect of the inhabitants, many of whom are in fact ignorant of Arabic or any other tongue. This is the more remarkable in that the villagers mix freely enough with their neighbours, yet their idiom neither spreads nor dies out—a noteworthy philological problem. Here we are looked upon as curiosities. Few of the men and none of the women have ever seen an Englishman

[1] Many years after some friends who had followed my footsteps told me that Sister Thecla had showed them my autograph, and remarked that I was still remembered in their prayers every evening.

before. Seeing is scarcely sufficient evidence for them, and evidently nothing would afford some of the bolder spirits greater delight than to apply the pin test. Nevertheless they are hospitably inclined, and there is no difficulty in obtaining supplies for dinner whilst we explore the neighbourhood. Half a mile beyond the outskirts the hillside is honeycombed with caves and tombs,—long since deserted and rifled,—many of them adorned with arrow-head and Roman inscriptions as yet unknown to the archæologist. Ma'aloola and its sister Syriac village, a few hours' ride farther, are well deserving a visit if for no other reason yet for their pristine simplicity as *terra incognita* to Baedeker and Murray.[1] Perhaps one of the sweetest spots for a next halt will be Yabrood, a village whose clean, whitewashed houses and chalky surroundings mark it out from afar in dazzling distinctness from the burnt surrounding landscape. The population is mixed Moslem and Christian, and nowhere is the restraint which is the usual consequence of Mussulman contact less visible than here. Especially are the Christian women of Yabrood frank and free in offering hospitality, and if the traveller arrive in the daytime, when the mankind is at toil, he will receive the same spontaneous welcome as he might expect in an English farmhouse. At Yabrood, as at Ma'aloola, we find a small community mixing with its surroundings, but preserving its own individuality and physiological type. The skin is as fair and white as ours, and many of the men have fair hair and beards and blue eyes. The girls have marvellous rose-leaf complexions, oval faces, dark brown hair mostly, and the same blue eyes. Scarcely an ill-favoured woman is to be seen, and two out of three might sit for Madonnas. So high is the reputation of the Yabrood maidens for beauty that suitors from Damascus often go thither in search of a wife.

After struggling for possession of the strangers, some cheery housewife who has carried off the prize will lead us triumphantly to her cottage, and there, when refreshment

[1] Renan's work, which is the fullest in detail concerning Syrian archæology, does not mention this district.

has been served, the rest crowd round for a talk, bringing bunches of roses and jasmine for the guests and fresh-cut barley for the mares. At first there is a good deal of shyness and restraint, but this soon wears off, and by the time the lords and masters come back we are fast friends with half the village, and cannot pretend to feeling at all like strangers in a strange land as we sketch some of the most picturesque figures with a dozen laughing maids and matrons leaning familiarly over us and criticising our crude efforts and clamouring to pose next. By all means let nobody who has a chance of going to Yabrood allow it to slip.

The next night we may pass at Kuteifeh, one of the caravan stations on the Aleppo road. But to reach it we have a long and thirsty ride through the gorge of Kaldun, where we are even without the poor resources of the shepherd wells which are to be struck here and there in the plains.[1]

The track is shut in from the breeze, and the heat is generally intense. The distance is probably not more than about thirty kilometres, but it is bad going; and one is relieved when Kuteifeh appears lying out in the plain among green fields. Here we can take our chance at the Okella or caravanserai, or ask for quarters with some friendly Sheikh. The former is the most interesting from the motley crowd we meet, amongst whom most likely we may find some wandering dervish, with tangled hair and beard and naked to the waist, the centre of a group of rugged nomads, to whom he is relating some marvellous tale of his powers or sanctity. These gentry are permitted almost any liberties, and we must not be astonished at the holy man's approaching us as we are at meat and

[1] These are mere holes about ten feet deep, with a few inches of muddy water at the bottom. Towards the end of summer they almost dry up, and the liquid mess which replaces water swarms with creeping things and smells aloud. I have frequently been obliged to drink through a handkerchief to avoid swallowing a tadpole or a water-devil; but a thirsty man will stick at nothing. Once riding through Kaldun we were caught in a sandstorm, which blew with a scorching wind all day. I had to tie my servant on to his horse, and he arrived half dead. My own tongue was painfully swollen and blackish for two days afterwards. Neither we nor the people we met could speak that day from this reason.

calmly thrusting a hairy paw into the dish to help himself. Kuteifeh lies on the edge of the desert on the way to Palmyra, and if the fancy takes us we may turn our horses' heads out to Tadmor, as it is called by the Bedouins. Or else we may march south-east to Dhumeyr through Rohaibeh, a queer, barbarous hamlet, whose folks are not very fond of strangers, and where, if you have a persuasive tongue, but not otherwise, you may manage to buy some of the peculiar embroidery worked by its women. At Dhumeyr there is an old fortress which must date from the Crusades, with portcullis and shooting loopholes, and a little tower over the gateway from which to drop down rocks on the enemy if they succeeded in getting so far. After this we can spend a day or two in the "Byoot es Sha'ar" or "Dwellings of Hair," as the Arabs call their tents, riding straight up to any of the larger ones and claiming a hospitality which is never refused. Another more adventurous trip is over to the Ledja and Hauran ; but this is not by any means safe for everybody, and not to be recommended to the amateur.

Some of the most interesting people in Damascus are the Jews. This downtrodden and despised race still retains many of its most picturesque and finest attributes in that city. One of the first houses to which I was introduced on arrival there belonged to a wealthy Israelite, and many a pleasant hour have I spent in its courtyard, trellised round with jasmine and wistaria, and cooled by the waters of the big fountain in the centre. Two prettier girls than Sara and Politza, the daughters, it would be hard to find, and they were always ready to lay themselves out to entertain their guests, whilst the younger could run up the trellis like a squirrel to pick a cluster of flowers with which to present you on leaving. If, however, you want to see the Damascus Jews really enjoying themselves you should go out to Jobar at the Feast of Ansara, corresponding to the Greek Whitsuntide.

To reach Jobar we must again pass the Bab Tooma, but instead of following the Aleppo road turn to the right amongst the orchards. The sun cannot pierce the

thick shade on our path, and the trees are heavy with apricots, plums, and walnuts. Here and there a garden is full of a picking party. Half a dozen are holding an enormous sheet, while two or three among the branches are shaking down the golden fruit. Now we have to make way for a Bedouin family migrating on camels and donkeys; for a camel recognises no rule of the road, but always takes the middle with a sovereign contempt for all creation. The Bedouin girls laugh at our discomfiture, but it is easy to forgive them for the pleasure of seeing a happy freewoman's face. The Bedaweeyehs, either young or old, have a general expression of content on their brown tattooed lips, and our idea of a girl can with difficulty be associated with any other Mussulman females, though it applies at once to the mischievous and merry daughters of the desert. In less than half an hour we enter the village and seek the Jewish quarter, a small square of low houses built round an open court, one side of which is occupied by the synagogue of St. George. It would be rash to attempt any accurate enumeration of the number of churches in Syria dedicated to the redoubtable soldier-saint, but there must be at least five or six within a day's ride of Damascus, each claiming the honour of containing his bones. The synagogue of Jobar is nearly subterranean, but the keepers do not take the trouble to keep it lighted. An old lady is always ready to show its mysteries to visitors, and a few loafers are equally ready to jostle and fight to follow the strangers in. An oblong slab covering a tomb supposed to be that of Elijah is the centre of attraction at the western end of the church; a tall and mean pulpit occupies the middle of the aisle, and the Books of the Law are kept at the eastern extremity. These are under lock and key in cupboards let into the wall, whose doors are inscribed in Hebrew with holy words, and they are further enclosed in cardboard and velvet cases embossed in silver. These cases open like oysters, and the scrolls of the law are revealed written in beautiful manuscript but not highly illuminated. A door to the right gives access to a dark

staircase, and with a rushlight and a Jew we may descend barefooted to the tomb of St. George. The Israelite prostrates himself and kisses the mark on the marble floor, which is the only sign of the sepulchre; and having seen all that is to be seen we can remount. As we emerge from the church a franc will buy a fervent blessing in the name of the God of Abraham, and a dozen invitations will be proffered to rest awhile in the dim interiors of the houses round the quadrangle—just visible through the doorways crowded with holiday-makers.

The open air seems preferable, nevertheless, and so we politely decline, and stroll leisurely out of the square, leaving our horses tied to the church porch. It does not take long to get out of Jobar, and we make for the gardens, past the Moslem threshing-floors, where unmuzzled oxen are treading out the corn, and brawny arms are tossing the barley ears aloft to catch the winnowing wind. Between the mud walls we can catch a glimpse of white dresses and an echo of many voices, which mark the camp of a picnic party. They have chosen the spot well, with olive, poplar, and willow trees growing beside a running stream, far enough from the village for the enjoyment of liberty and freedom from observation. A few fine mares tethered and hobbled show that the Jew is rejoicing in momentary emancipation, for riding is an amusement he does not care to indulge in at Damascus. The exercise is one which Mohammedans consider too noble for any but co-religionists, and, though forced with disgust to see the proud Frank riding thoroughbreds through their holy streets, the same necessity does not bind them to respect the Jew, who will often run a good chance of being ignominiously forced to dismount if a fanatical Moslem bids him. Most of the present party have, however, ridden on hired animals, which will return at sunset or on the morrow to take them back. As we arrive, four donkeys trot up from the opposite direction with lady riders, who scorn side-saddles and tumble off with awkward haste to make a *bout de toilette* before joining their friends under the trees. For all Jews know

each other, and even if by rare chance it should happen that they were not acquainted before, an occasion like this would at once bring the strangers into relation with the rest, and a stronger intimacy would be established in five minutes by a share of the pipe and a seat on the carpet than we in England could attain to in a month's intercourse. Apart from the complicated relationships which always exist by intermarriage between every Jewish family in any particular town, and besides the national freemasonry which unites the members of a race against which the world seems to have issued a decree of outlawry, the Jews of Damascus have the common tie of a common and ever-present enemy, and of identical interests and identical wrongs, which they cannot tire of describing. When he is in the city, the Hebrew never forgets that walls have ears, and speaks of his woes in undertones and half apologetically. Now, however, there are none but friends around, and he can launch into the bitterest expression of his feelings against this official and that one, against the impossibility of recovering his debts, against the ruin brought upon him by dishonoured Serkiz bonds, and against the perfidy of every successive Wali whose promises have run free like water and as quickly away. Nevertheless the influence of country quiet and good meat and drink will gradually lead away from these subjects, and then the instruments of music will be produced. These may be many or few, but the 'ood and the zither are sure to be among them. Thirty years ago the former was unknown in Syria, but a musical Damascene, who heard it played in Egypt, was so enchanted with its capacities that he set to work to learn the art, and brought it back with him to his own country. This many-stringed banjo is now one of the favourite instruments, and is perhaps the most highly esteemed, if we except the violin. Playing the violin is a comparatively rare accomplishment, and he who has mastered the fiddle is at once placed in the first rank of musicians. Curiously scriptural is the action of the white-haired old man who takes down the zither from the willow-tree,—the

harp hung up by the waters in the land of captivity,—and then the concert begins. At first it is listened to with rapt attention, till the violinist breaks into a song of his people, and all join in the refrain with glad enthusiasm. It requires to be a Jew, however, to share in their evident admiration. The player on the 'ood can talk a little English, perhaps,—many of them speak either English or French,—and undertakes to prove to demonstration the innate superiority of Oriental music to the European gamut. As a Jew of Syria is worse to argue with than an Irishman, it is better to agree at once, and afford general pleasure, even at the expense of a twinge of conscience. The next day half the Jews in Damascus will be repeating how Elias convinced an Englishman that Arabian melody was far sweeter than Frankish. There is no separation here between men and women, and the latter speak as freely to the stranger as to their brothers or husbands. Some of them are very pretty, but only the young; after fifteen the natural charms of a Jewess fade quickly. She is indefatigable, however, in trying to remedy the ravages of years with the powder puff, the hare's foot, and the kohling needle. To our ideas a more ungracious spectacle would be hard to find than a married Jewess in full costume. Over her natural hair she wears a matron's wig with a painfully wide and white parting, while an enormous fringe curls over her forehead. Her upper and under eyelids are equally loaded with kohl, and her eyebrows are joined and thickened to unnatural proportions with the same pigment. None of her skin is visible through a liberal layer of enamel powder, over which rouge has been distributed as brilliantly as if she were behind the footlights instead of under a scorching Syrian sun. But there is no accounting for taste; and as the fashion appears equally to please the ladies and their male companions, far be it from us to quarrel with it. Though they seem to get on well together, the men pay little attention to the women, and least of all to the unmarried, while the jealousy of the Moslem does not appear to enter into their minds. The women, on the

other hand, are extremely coquettish, and it cannot be put down to them as a virtue if the green-eyed phantom is an absentee from their homes. Nevertheless, they are good mothers and ridiculously fond of their children, whom they universally spoil with too much kindness.

The shadows of the tall poplars, purpling over the June-ripened corn, give the signal for a general move. The ashes are emptied from the narghileh bowls, the dishes are washed in the stream, the instruments are packed in their cases, and the rugs are rolled from the grass. Many of the holiday-makers are going to sleep with their friends at Jobar, probably fifteen or twenty in a low and stuffy room; but they are accustomed to such experiences. The patient donkeys, who have made the journey many a time that day, are waiting for their last loads, and whisk their rat-tails merrily as they receive it. It is indifferent to them whether it be a sack of corn or a fifteen-stone Jewess; the weight is equally dead. So we leave them there and gallop into Damascus, changing our company in ten minutes from the descendants of David to the followers of Mahomet; and, instead of the Hebrew's love-song, we hear the hundred-tongued minarets proclaiming the oldest city's creed as the sunset reddens Salahiyeh.

At length the time came for me to be transferred to another post, and I was appointed Consular Assistant to the Cairo Agency. My play-days were now past, and after my long holiday, as I could only consider my stay in Damascus, I was quite prepared for hard work. Of course my departure was made the occasion for much wailing and weeping amongst my native friends, a great many of whom were quite ready and anxious to accompany me to my new home—indeed, it was not without difficulty that Jemileh was dissuaded from transferring her *penates* also to Cairo.

Finally, however, the good-byes were successfully got over, and I crept through the needle gate of my little house, mounted the "Bint" for the last time to canter down to the diligence, and half an hour later was bowling down the Barada valley on the road to Beyrout and the sea.

CHAPTER III

MY new post was a complete change from sleepy Syria. Cairo was rapidly becoming the centre of diplomatic attention after the deposition of Ismail and the commencement of the Nationalist movement, and there was plenty to do at the Agency, where I found Sir E. Malet as British Agent and Consular-General. At present the Cairo Agency is little inferior to a small embassy, but at that time the entire staff consisted of a private secretary not in the service of the Foreign Office, a certain M. Isidore Ornstein, a dragoman and archivist named Aranghi, and myself. None of us had any very clearly defined attributions, and any work that turned up was given to the one who was handiest. At the beginning most of the copying was handed over to me, whilst Ornstein and Aranghi drafted, docketed, and cyphered; but it was not long before I was also enlisted for cyphering duty and initiated into the mysteries. So incessant was this part of our labours that before six months, by dint of eternally seeing repetitions of the same groups of figures, I could generally form a very fair idea of the contents of a cypher message on current questions without a reference to the keys. A thorough knowledge of French also enabled me to take a good deal of what had previously been Ornstein's especial department off his hands, and after the fashion of the world with willing horses, very small rest was given to the new Consular Assistant. Later on, when it became physically impossible to cope with the mass of work, Mr. Cartwright was sent out from London to help; but even then our unfortunate Chancery was fairly overwhelmed. The average weekly bag for the Foreign Office alone was about fifty despatches, many of them with

several enclosures, and of course every one of these was a copy from a draft made by us and kept in our archives. This was exclusive of correspondence with our Vice-Consulates and elsewhere, not to mention the Constantinople Embassy, which wanted copies for itself of a great many of our letters home.

If the work was heavy, though, it was extremely interesting, and the more I had to do the better pleased I felt. At the same time I lost no opportunity of profiting by my acquaintance with Arabic to make friends amongst prominent Egyptians of all grades and denominations, Ulema, notables, and officers, so that I was in continuous touch with the Nationalist revival from its inception. The inner history of the period preceding the war would be extremely instructive, and differ materially from that published in blue, yellow, and other coloured books; but unfortunately, from the confidential position I then occupied, I am naturally precluded from entering into this subject. Whether it will finally prove an advantage to England to have taken over the Protectorate of Egypt is a point which the future must decide. It is, however, quite certain that the war might have been avoided if the colonels and Mahmoud Sami had been approached in a different spirit. As things were managed, the *dénouement* was prepared beforehand, and hurried on with giant strides. France was bluntly asked to say "Yes" or "No" as to whether she would participate in forcible measures against the Egyptian Army, and on M. Freycinet's negative, England at once prepared for action before she should have time to change her mind. Had Gambetta continued in power we should never have been permitted to take our single initiative. His fall, however, disorganised French foreign policy, and we were given a free hand, to the intense rage and mortification of every Frenchman in Egypt, whilst the officers on the French men-of-war shed tears of despair and shame when ordered to take their ships out from Egyptian waters. Ever since the early spring the strain at the Agency had been very severe, and in June, Sir E. Malet, never a strong man, was

attacked by fever, and was obliged to leave for Alexandria to recruit his health. Mr. Cartwright was thus temporarily and nominally placed in charge of the Agency, although it is no secret that, in so far as our line was directed at all from Egypt, it was dictated by Sir A. Colvin, the masterful representative of England in the dual control. Sir Auckland had long since irrevocably made up his mind that armed intervention was necessary, and left no stone unturned to bring it about. His influence over Sir E. Malet was very great, and when our Minister was invalided Sir Auckland carried on his campaign directly instead of through Sir Edward, but it was always with one and the same inflexible purpose, to crush Arâbi.

Almost simultaneously with the sickness of the Chief our Vice-Consul, Mr. R. Borg, also fell ill, and I was appointed to act for him, without, however, being taken off duty at the Agency. In a short time Sir Edward had need of Mr. Cartwright, and summoned him to Alexandria, and I was then also put "In charge of Archives" at the Agency. By this time everybody knew that war was virtually decided upon, unless the Sultan could be induced to intervene—an extremely improbable eventuality, as there was plenty of evidence that he was tacitly backing the Nationalists. Before operations could be begun, however, it was necessary to clear British subjects out of Cairo. The rumour was industriously propagated that a massacre of Europeans in Cairo, to which that of Alexandria would be nothing, was certain to follow the echo of the first British gun, and a wild exodus began. Being myself in close communication with the so-called rebel leaders, and having received numberless assurances that nothing of the sort was to be feared, I did my utmost to counteract this impression; but no amount of despatches and telegrams sufficed to produce any effect in Downing Street, and I was ordered to see that all of our subjects were sent away, by force if necessary,—and it often was,—in order to induce them to leave their homes.

Some idea can be formed of what this meant when

we remember that there are about four thousand British subjects in Cairo and the neighbourhood, mostly Maltese of the poorer sort, living in back streets and alleys. These unhappy creatures often refused altogether to quit their rooms, and the assistance of the police had to be called in to transport them and their *penates* to the railway station, which, for about a week or ten days, was filled with refugees, whilst special trains were running to the full capacity of the line and rolling stock. Most of my time was spent on the platform threatening, cajoling, and otherwise effecting the packing of my subjects, each of whose names had to be registered as he or she left. My only assistant was Mr. Sakroug, the Consular Dragoman, and the cavasses, and our work went on pretty well all day and all night, till we were heartily sick and weary of it, none the less because of our conviction that it was quite superfluous. But every morning, and sometimes oftener, came a telegram in cypher, "How many more British subjects have you left? Cannot you expedite matters?" etc.; and I would reply, "Two hundred; one hundred; sixty; twenty," as the case might be, until I was at length able to wire: "Only two, a governess and groom in service in Khedivial families, whom cannot reach."

I was then informed that I might go myself; but this I was extremely loth to do. Sir E. Malet had very generously left me in possession of his house, carriages and horses, and whole establishment, more or less; and, as any youngster would, I was enjoying the position immensely. The only difficulty was for food, as all the European shops were shut, and it was not always easy to get bread and meat. Opposite the Agency, however, lived Princess Nazli Khanem, the beautiful and accomplished daughter of Mustapha Fazil Pasha, and widow of the Turkish Ambassador in Paris. This lady is the only one in Moslem society who freely receives Europeans of both sexes in her drawing-room with the consent of the Sultan, and she has always honoured me with the kindest friendship. When I had no lunch or dinner, her table was

open to me, or if I was too busy a meal was sent across the street. She was at that time heart and soul with the National Party, whose leaders had no secrets from her, and consulted her in all their difficulties. It was through the Princess that I made the acquaintance of many of them, and was enabled to gain information which it would have been impossible to obtain elsewhere. It can easily be understood, therefore, that under the circumstances I replied that I would much rather stay where I was. To this came the brief answer, " Hold yourself in readiness to leave for Alexandria on the shortest notice," and in the afternoon, " Leave by the evening train. An escort will meet you at Alexandria, and a boat to take you on board the *Tanjore*." There was nothing more to be said, and that night I drove through the deserted streets down to the sea, and rowed off to the P. & O. steamer, which was crowded with Britishers in a fever of excitement, as it was known that Admiral Seymour had promised to bombard at daybreak, unless some guns which were suspiciously trained on our ships were dismounted. Everybody was up before dawn and watching our fleet taking up battle formation in readiness for the signal which was not long in coming. The *Alexandra* fired the first shot, and in less than five minutes the whole sea-front was so enveloped in smoke that very little could be seen at all. The first volley and the return from the forts was certainly a magnificent spectacle, but after that the bombardment was not much to look at, consisting for us merely of ear-splitting cracks from out dense curtains of smoke. It went on monotonously all that day and a good part of the next, but at noon I received a message to report myself to Lord Charles Beresford on the *Condor*, for orders. Without any idea of what these were likely to be, I lost no time in leaving the *Tanjore*, and soon found Lord Charles, who at once took me ashore with him. The sights that met us in the city baffle description. It was a Dante-esque Inferno, alight almost from end to end, the flames running riot from street to street without any attempt to check them being made, with wild figures here and there pillag-

ing and looting, and ghastly corpses swollen to gigantic proportions lying charred and naked in the roadways. Very little could be done that day beyond the most cursory inspection of such streets as were passable; but next morning the business of restoring order was taken seriously in hand. I believe in all a force of between three and four hundred bluejackets was landed on the 13th and 14th, and were distributed in three guards—the Main Guard, at the head of the Square, the Zaptieh Guard, and the Arsenal Guard, which Lord Charles himself occupied as headquarters. The crews of several foreign gunboats also landed, and co-operated by taking up various positions, thus assisting us materially at the outset. I clothed myself in a marine blue tunic and acted as general utility man, being the only official who knew Arabic or the Arabs. The first things to be done were to put out the fires and stop the looting. To this end a fire brigade, principally of volunteers, was formed by Mr. Cornish, if my memory serves, and worked most indefatigably and successfully. A proclamation was likewise issued that any person found in the act of incendiarism or looting, or with loot in his possession, would immediately be shot. Three graves were kept always open on the Great Square, as an eloquent warning to evil-doers, and as soon as one was occupied another was dug. The culprits were tied to the trees and executed publicly. Justice was sharp and shrift was short. Any man called upon to stop in the street was shot down at once if he refused to do so. One of the hottest corners for this snap-shooting was occupied by the Americans, who accounted for more, I think, than any other patrol. On arrest a prisoner was tried by drumhead court-martial, and the sentence was executed without delay. For minor offences the cat was applied.

By these means the city was cleared in an incredibly short time of the ruffians who had been in possession since the Egyptians retired. Not, however, before they had gutted all the largest shops and houses, even half-way to Ramleh. What became of all the property has remained

a mystery. I was appointed "Captain of the Loot," and had charge of all that we could recover, which was stored in an enormous corridor at the Arsenal. Any individual who could prove that any article he recognised was his own had permission to take it away. Very little of any real value, however, was brought in, and still less was properly claimed, at anyrate during my tenure of office. The only objects worth anything were those voluntarily deposited with me for security; and it was a sign of the confidence reposed in the British that often when giving in large sums of loose money and jewellery the depositor not only did not ask for, but refused to take any formal receipt, simply giving his name. A good many excursions were made in search of stolen property, and the village of Karmouss, which was inhabited entirely by thieves and cut-throats, was raided. The people in many cases declined to open their doors, which had to be burst or blown open; but the result was disappointing, as, though we carried out several cartloads of stuff, it was mostly rubbish, scarcely worth the trouble. The "Captaincy of the Loot" was only a minor duty, my principal occupation being to assist at courts-martial and executions—by no means a pleasant or agreeable one. For about a week we were supposed to be acting in the name of the Khedive, and such a week none of us probably wish ever to pass again. Two civil governors were dismissed during that time for recalcitrancy, and I do not know how many ruffians had their accounts settled. I remember one case where very summary justice had to be done. It should be borne in mind that whilst our small force was coping with endless difficulties in Alexandria, we had little or no knowledge of what the enemy was doing outside the walls. Standing orders, therefore, directed that whenever an alarm was sounded, all the bluejackets on duty about the town were to assemble in the Arsenal Guard, so as to be under the protection of the ships. One afternoon two Greeks and an Arab had been caught red-handed and condemned to be shot next morning. Suddenly the alarm was given. These prisoners were at

the Zaptieh, and Captain Carter decided that we could not take them to the Arsenal, and that the only thing to be done was to shoot them then and there. I had the mission of informing the miserable men that they had five minutes more only in this world. They were all in a small room some ten feet square. The Greeks cried for mercy, and struggled and fought desperately before they were successively executed in front of the Arab, who, however, refused to have his eyes bandaged or to be tied, and standing up against the wall, folded his arms, and himself gave the word "Idrub!" ("Fire"). Their bodies were left lying there, as we repaired in haste to the Arsenal; but it was only a false alarm after all.

Gradually the British reduced the city from the hell it was when they entered into something like quiet, and then it was resolved to give back his rule to the Khedive. I had been at the court-martial that day and seen three men sentenced, and went back to lunch expecting to be summoned by the authorities, as by agreement, to see the execution. Evening came on, however, and hearing nothing from him, I sent up to the new Governor to know how this was. He replied that the sentence had been duly carried out that afternoon. I scarcely believed this, especially as one of the three, a black, was a rich man who had been one of the ringleaders in the Alexandria massacres, and had always managed to evade punishment. With Lord Charles's consent I therefore requested that the officer who had commanded the firing party should be sent down to me with a few mounted men. He gave me a very circumstantial account of the whole affair; but I nevertheless doubted his word, and at nine o'clock at night we set off for the gravel pits a mile or two outside the gates, where he declared that the condemned men had been shot and buried. On the way we stopped to take up some lanterns, picks, and shovels, with which we rode on. On reaching the spot, two or three of the police began to dig, under the direction of the officer. It was a dark, cloudy night, and a more gruesome job cannot be imagined. After five minutes a black arm was

revealed. The Captain asked if I was satisfied. It was impossible to feel so, though, until I had seen the dead man's face, as I fancied them quite capable of having shot some other poor wretch in his stead. A little more pick-and-shovel work, and the light of the lantern enabled me to identify him. It turned out that the other two also were really there, and when our eerie task was over, we covered them hurriedly up again, and galloped furiously back, one of the results being that my horse slipped and threw himself down and me a score of feet over his head, cutting both his knees and spraining my wrist badly. This was, however, only the first of three bad falls I had in a week, the last one cracking one of my ribs and my left arm. On that occasion the horse was quietly walking, but slithered on the greasy slabs of stone with which Alexandria is paved, and rolled over me.

Perhaps the most dangerous and disagreeable of my experiences at this period was on the day following that which I have just described. True to the theory that the Khedivial authority was now in full swing, our bluejackets were exempted from further execution duty, to their great relief, and the next prisoners—one to be shot and two to be flogged—were handed over to the Egyptians. In order to make the ceremony impressive, and not to have a hole-and-corner business like the gravel pits, the sentence was to be carried out at Karmouss, the nest of thieves already mentioned, and the native village of the men.

On going to the Governorate I found that the party had already started, so with a young lieutenant (Montresor, I think, by name) I trotted in pursuit, catching them on the Square. The prisoners were being marched on foot under a guard of four police and a mounted officer, with two heralds going before, proclaiming that for such and such crimes they had been justly sentenced by the Khedive to death and flogging. A large crowd was already at the tail of the procession as we filed through Moharrem Bey Gate, and when we passed Karmouss almost the whole riff-raff population joined in, till there must have been some two thousand onlookers. I could see none too

friendly glances directed at myself by many who probably recognised me as having visited them with the patrols previously, and the whole demeanour of the mob was menacing. Authority was solely represented by the five policemen, Montresor, and myself, whilst a third Englishman was present in the person of Mr. Bennett Burleigh. This little group was almost lost amidst a surging, angry sea of the very wildest and worst characters of a notably disreputable seaport populace. On arriving at what the Captain considered a convenient spot, preparations were begun by a shallow grave being dug. Into this the murderer was fitted and propped up with a slice of stone, as he was already in a semi-fainting condition. His eyes were then, perhaps mercifully, bandaged, and after patting him on the back and encouraging him by saying it would soon be over, the police began to move off; and when I inquired whither they were going, the officer answered, "Over there," pointing to a ridge some thirty yards away. I tried to explain to him that an execution was not target practice, and had the men brought back and placed in proper position; but after the volley, in which two out of the four rifles missed fire, the prisoner fell forward, writhing and moaning. The Zaptiehs were told to load again quickly and repeat the fire, but even then death did not seem to have ensued. I asked for a doctor to certify, and at last, leisurely opening his umbrella, one of the fraternity stepped out of the crowd and approached. As he touched the body there was a fresh movement, the signal for renewed execrations on all sides, at which nobody really could wonder. Though only the Egyptian officer and myself could understand what they were saying, it was evident to all that mischief was meant, and we were all fully prepared for the worst. When the sickening tragedy was finally completed, the police captain besought us to get away whilst yet there was time; but we insisted on seeing the flogging carried out, remarking that the slightest symptom of weakness or fear could only be the death-warrant for every one of us.

The offenders were consequently brought out, half

stripped, and laid on the ground face downwards, being held down by the head and heels whilst the bastinado was being applied. The ghastly incidents of the execution had, however, exasperated the crowd to such a pitch that they pressed close round our group, and amidst the furious roar of voices I distinguished one close to my elbow, muttering that it was time to put an end to the infidels torturing the believers, and especially the "Zabit el iswid," the "Black Officer," as they had nicknamed me, from my dark plain tunic, and also perhaps from my position at the courts-martial and executions of sentences. In a twinkling I had seized the speaker, a portly old Arab Sheikh, be-ringed and adorned with long gold chains and jewellery, and holding him fast, I addressed the mob, saying that they ought to be ashamed of themselves in sympathising with felons, who were lawfully paying the penalty for their misdeeds in accordance with the sentences pronounced by a Court of their own countrymen, and ratified by the Khedive their sovereign, as whose friends and supporters we English were there, and added that any violence would certainly be visited on them a hundredfold with the utmost severity. A sullen silence succeeded, broken only by the thwack of the cane and the howls of the victims until the punishment was complete.

When it was over we had a carriage called, and mounting with my prisoner and Mr. Montresor, a policeman with loaded rifle on the box, and Mr. Burleigh riding alongside, we drove at a walk through the dense throng of the Karmouss wolves back to Alexandria. The Egyptian officer, as soon as his duty was performed, asked to be excused, and clapping spurs to his steed, was quickly out of sight. As soon as we reached one of our Guards I held a "drumhead" on my friend and gave him four dozen with the cat. He went out smiling, but half an hour later he came to the room where I was writing, a changed man. His complaint was that the sailors, on making his toilet, had taken all his money and ornaments from him, and "surely the thrashing was enough punishment for the words he had spoken." On this

I gave him a pungent lecture on the enormity of his offence, telling him that he might thank Allah all his life that he had not been shot and laid out by the side of the other man at Karmouss on the spot; and then sending for his purse, rings, and chains, which had only been deposited in a place of safety, I turned him out. Next year that Sheikh came to me in Cairo with little presents and admitted the justice of the lesson he had received, so that we were always the best of friends afterwards. Thus ended this episode, a striking instance of the moral power of the Western over the barbarian, though it was not one to be proved too often, as I remarked when reporting the circumstances to Lord Charles, with a request that if any more men had to be shot at Karmouss by the Egyptian police with Englishmen present, it might be advisable also to have a strong English guard.

I believe, however, that this was the last of the executions, though flogging for petty offences in the town went on some little while longer. The extreme utility of the old cat-o'-nine tails and triangle was thoroughly demonstrated on this occasion. No man who has once tasted it is ever likely to run the risk of a renewal of the acquaintance, and the whole circle of his friends or of those privileged to witness its operations are equally certain to avoid its caresses. At Alexandria there was an amateur official who once expressed a wish to witness a flogging, and asked to have notice given to him of the next one. After seeing the man triced up, the leather collar fitted on, and four or five cuts administered, he had, however, satisfied his curiosity, and hastily went out and swallowed a tumbler of neat brandy. The difficulty with our men was to persuade them to lay on the cat effectually. If given by a strong man and an artist with a will, I doubt if the stoutest sinner could stand more than a dozen without losing consciousness. After that it is mere cruelty to continue. One or two dozen, more delicately applied, would probably have far greater effect, as the first two or three lashes, if heavily and scientifically thrown on, completely numb all subsequent sensation.

I regret keeping no notes of this time, but perhaps the reader has had enough of the horrors of a fortnight whose memory always comes back as a sort of nightmare of fire and blood. It must, nevertheless, be a satisfaction to have been one of the comparative handful of Englishmen who, under Lord Charles, gave the Egyptians their first taste of our ideas of justice and order. During the whole of the short space that I was attached to my naval Chief he gave me an almost free hand in every civil question, and the most unstinted and unlimited support whenever asked for. It was nothing but pleasure to work for such a superior, who, whilst he took all responsibility, gave me practically full authority to act as I pleased in all civil matters, rarely, and never without cause, found fault, and, which is too seldom the case, was always ready with generous approval. If that fortnight is not good to look back upon in any other light, it will at anyrate be perpetually remembered with gratitude towards my genial Chief.

No sooner was Alexandria quieted than we learnt of the intention to send Sir Garnet Wolseley out in command of an expeditionary force to quell the "Arâbi insurrection." During the recent operations I must confess that my sympathies had been much more with the so-styled rebels than with the Khedive, who had played a sorry part, and up to the last moment had certainly encouraged them to return the fire of our fleet; but it seemed to suit our policy to use him for a stalking-horse, and as a servant of the Foreign Office it was not for me to have an opinion, but merely to set myself to do what was ordered, and that with all my might. In about three weeks Colonel Gordon replaced Lord Charles Beresford as Commandant of Alexandria, and the stricter red-tapeism of a military dictatorship supplanted the rough-and-ready methods of the navy. For a few days I was under a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, and my energies, which had been brought up to high pressure, were slowly allowed to lapse back into mere supervision of interpreters and loot. But the toga had altogether been put into the background by the sword, and I had nearly forgotten that I belonged to Downing

Street, so familiar was uniform, boot and spur, the password, and the habit of taking and giving orders. Sir E. Malet had gone home, Mr. Cartwright was in official and nominal charge, with Sir Auckland Colvin really holding the reins, and I seemed to be definitely detached, to my infinite delight, it need hardly be said, from cyphers and archives. It was now that I had my third fall, and whilst nursing my wounded rib and arm as best I could afford, I was summoned to the presence of Sir Garnet. Being still the only available public servant with any respectable knowledge of the language and country, I was pretty sure of employment; but so fearful was I that my crippled condition might stand in the way that I abandoned my sling and presented myself to our present Commander-in-Chief as an "able-bodied." He put a few pertinent questions to me, and in less than ten minutes I was on the Intelligence Staff under Sir Redvers Buller, with instructions to collect and organise as quickly as possible a competent body of interpreters, of whom I was to be the chief and superintendent on the H.Q. Staff. If I remember rightly, two days were given me to do this and to make all my own arrangements for the coming campaign. Within the allotted time I secured about one hundred and twenty men, more or less qualified, and reported myself with two very good horses chosen from the best I could find in the place. One was a whole brown, eight years old, half bred, big in the bone, deep in the chest, and sound as a bell; the other, a thorough-bred grey, four years, rather light and skittish, and very fast, but with slight splints, which troubled him now and again. All the rest of my equipment I was able to draw from stores, and my few odds and ends of clothing and suchlike went into a small valise. I was given a soldier servant and attached to one of the Intelligence Messes, with pay at the rate of about three pounds a day, so I was rather pleased at my novel position.

The political situation was then very curious, and nobody exactly knew whether we were making war on our own account, or that of the Sultan, or of the Khedive.

The Arâbi army was always called rebel, but invariably treated as fair belligerents. All that we really cared about was that we had an enemy and a nice country to fight in, so that everybody was in the highest of spirits. Posterity alone can judge of the wisdom of that campaign. Its immediate and continuing consequence has been to earn for England the bitter enmity of France. As long as we remain in Egypt, so long must we be prepared to encounter French hostility at every step. The interests of France are far more sentimental than material in Egypt; but the French are a sentimental people, and our presence in possession of the land of their Canal is an open ulcer on their pride, in spite of the financial benefits accruing thereby to Parisian bondholders and other financiers with capital in Egypt. As for our own interests in occupying the country, I failed to see them. I may be very dense, but a prolonged residence in the land of the Pharaohs showed me only the benefits we conferred on the native and foreign population without any relatively superior ones for ourselves. On the contrary, we spend huge sums of money in a country from which we draw nothing, and we keep an Achilles' heel inviting the arrows of our jealous Continental neighbours. The experience of the first war, if it taught us nothing else, clearly proved the uselessness of the Suez Canal as a waterway in case of war with a foreign enemy. In fact, it may be taken for granted that not a single man or horse or sack of grain would be sent through it if hostilities were begun with France or Russia either in Egypt or the Far East. Indeed, with the increased speed of our large ocean-going steamers the saving in time would be trifling between transport through the Mediterranean and down the Canal and despatch round the Cape, without reckoning the thousand and one risks of vessels in the Mediterranean and Canal waters. Beyond her European carrying trade, which would always be in danger in case of war, England has no further interest in the Mediterranean, and I am not alone in the conviction that the time will inevitably come when Britain will recognise that her place in the world is as a great Colonial

and not as a European Power, and will withdraw from near Eastern waters, leaving her quondam rivals to fight for the supremacy therein. Let us suppose, for argument's sake, that England retires from Egypt and from active intervention in Turkey, receiving as a compensation some point on the African coast opposite Gibraltar. The result would be that we should no longer have any subject for quarrel with France, who, on the other hand, would at once commence a struggle with Russia for naval command of the Mediterranean. We, with our stations at the Straits, could practically make the Mediterranean a *mare clausum*—a naval rat-pit for others. By no longer opposing Russia in Turkey there is no reason why we should not acquire her friendship, and nobody will deny that could such an alliance ever be established it would be worth a much larger sacrifice than our already moribund love for the Turks. Britain and Russia together could easily rule the world without fear of any possible combination against them. Another advantage would be that all the energy and strength we now waste in Europe could then be devoted to our colonies, and we could look on with indifference to the strife of the five other Great Powers whilst ever increasing our own wealth and prosperity outside their sphere of action. It is evident that the moment is not now very distant when we may be brought into conflict in Africa or China, and how much freer and more vigorous our policy would be if we were quit of the wretched Concert of Europe! The objection always made to the Utopia thus sketched is that we should lose our Mediterranean carrying trade, and that the millions spent in Malta would be useless thenceforth. This is only partially true. In case of war with France or Russia (or both, if the alliance is worth anything), our commercial ships would always be in danger in the Mediterranean, and our carrying trade in that sea would temporarily be suspended. Our fleet would have quite enough work to defend itself, and could do very little towards the protection of merchant vessels, let alone the fact that the bulk of our trade is with Constantinople and Russia, both

of which countries would then probably be enemies. In time of peace there should be no damage done to our merchant carriers by the fact that we were no longer in political rivalry and conflict with any other Power in Europe. As long as goods have to be transported, and as British ships are best able to meet the requirements of exporters and importers, the carrying trade will remain in our hands. As regards Malta, its value as a coaling station would certainly diminish if we withdrew from the Mediterranean. But this would especially be so only in time of war, when, if we had no interests to protect, we should have no need of a large Mediterranean fleet. In days of peace ships could continue to coal there just as they do now. To be thorough, though, we ought also to give up Malta or secure to it some sort of Belgian neutrality; otherwise it would always remain a vulnerable and tempting point for an enemy's fleet to attack. By holding Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, and Egypt, we are supposed to completely secure the sea route to India; but both of the islands would be sources of weakness if we were at war with France and Russia, and the Canal is by a consensus of opinion of experts no longer to be reckoned upon for transit in war time. It is invariably said that if we were to leave Egypt one week France would be there the week following, but surely this could be prevented by a solemn international agreement neutralising Egypt and the Canal for all time. But even if the worst came to the worst, I would go so far as to say that if France were to hold Egypt instead of us we should be the gainers, since she would then be in the unpleasant position we are now occupying, incurring European jealousy and enmity, and with a country to defend in case of war which would seriously cripple the effectiveness of her naval and land forces by the ships and men which would be required. A war cannot last for ever, and the tendency of our epoch is to shorten great conflicts. Let Egypt then be occupied by France. In peace our trade route to India would not be affected, and in war it would be closed for so long as hostilities lasted. It is only thus far that we should

suffer. The trade route through the Canal, and nothing else, since that artery is condemned for transport in war.

To put the most extreme case, we may give Constantinople to Russia, who will inevitably take it some day, Syria and Egypt to France, Macedonia to Austria, and the rest of available territory to any Power who may be able to grab it. We should then be friendly with France, and could arrange a *modus vivendi* with her in Africa, and with Russia in the Far East.[1] As long as we hold the North-West frontier we have nothing to fear from Russia, even if hostile, which she would have no longer any reason for being if we ceased opposing her in Turkey. It is quite time that the nightmare of Russian designs on India should be dispelled. Russia wants an outlet in the Mediterrancan and nothing else nowadays, unless it be a port in the Far East for her Siberian Railway. The result of her obtaining Constantinople would almost surely be a sharp contest for Mediterranean naval supremacy with France, at which we could look on at least with indifferent eyes. Any Russian officer will tell you, as dozens have told me, that Russia has long ceased to have any designs on India, where we are far too strong. The intrigues periodically carried on in Afghanistan and the Pamir regions are merely feints and pin-pricks in return for our mistrust and systematically blocking attitude against her in Turkey. It is true that if such a partition as above ever took place we should lose political prestige in the councils of Europe, but such as it is that prestige has of late brought us nothing but worry in the task of attempting to maintain it, and if we could gracefully and voluntarily give up all pretensions to interfering in the ambitious designs of our Continental neighbours, I cannot perceive that we should lose thereby. If we could take up the stand of America—one of absolute indifference except where our material interests were concerned, with no political or sentimental European policy whatsoever—I maintain that we should still, with our immense wealth

[1] I only consider these two Powers as factors, since Germany, strong as she is in Europe, is impotent against England abroad.

and our overwhelming naval supremacy, which should be not only kept up but increased, be just as important a factor in history as in the past. Our Indian Empire would not suffer, and we should be able to direct the whole of our might to the consolidation of it, and of our Colonies. Though I am not sure that anyone has had the temerity to go to the lengths I have just done in imagination, yet far abler brains have conceived, and abler pens advocated the withdrawal from Egypt, and the *entente* with France and Russia as our true Greater England policy.

After this digression into a very wide field, I may return to my own little story again.

We had already engaged in a skirmish or two on the outskirts of Alexandria, but nothing very serious had occurred, and everyone was on tiptoe for the real business to begin. But the plan of campaign was still a profound secret, though worked out down to small details at head-quarters, and the first move was anticipated with feverish impatience.

CHAPTER IV

IT was on the 18th of July that the transports and convoys left Alexandria with sealed orders for Aboukir Bay. A general idea prevailed, and was purposely encouraged, that we were to have some more bombarding, and the ships drew up that evening in battle array off the forts. As soon, however, as it was fairly dark we hove anchor, and next morning found us at Port Said.

Just as I have abstained from giving more than a few personal recollections on operations hitherto, I also propose to refer my readers to official despatches and previous excellent works on the subject for the connected story of the campaign. On arrival at Ismailia the whole of that little town was already rapidly being transformed into a big camp. I at once took up quarters in the "Hotel des Bains," generally known then as "Bain's Hotel," whilst the Headquarter Staff installed itself at the "Chalêt." Accommodation was very scarce, as may be imagined, and I had not been long in my room before more luggage began to arrive, followed by a very noisy and vulgar foreign contractor. I inquired what he wanted, to which he replied that he had come to sleep there; and on my telling him he could not do so as it was my room, he said there was no other and therefore he meant to stay. Had he been civil I might under the circumstances have allowed him a corner, but as it was I immediately offered him the choice of the door or the window as an exit, and on his continued insolence pitched him out of the latter, to his intense astonishment. My first business was to equip my interpreters. I have had a good deal to do with soldiers, and I certainly would rather command the worst and most unruly regiment in the service than my

squad of about one hundred and twenty polyglots. Every one of them had to be furnished with a horse and accoutrements, a pistol, rug, water bottle, and other conveniences, for all of which I had to indent and hold myself responsible. Any commanding officer in need of an interpreter applied to me, and expected instantly to be supplied with a superfine article at a gallop. Some of them could not or would not ride, others disliked being under fire, and resignations were frequent; but in one way and another requirements were generally met. When everything was over, though, I was rather taken aback by an official request to hand in to store again all the articles I had drawn out. At that time most of my lambs had long since returned to their homes, on whose walls I daresay these same warlike trophies are now hanging. At any-rate I seldom saw an interpreter again after once detaching him on duty to some regiment or other, and of course I had no control whatever, ultimately, over him or his equipment. After some correspondence I succeeded in evading this claim, though I daresay had I been a real soldier I should have had to pay for all that was missing. One of the initial difficulties discovered was the unsuitability of English horses for work in the deep loose sand, and likewise the imperative need for mounted infantry. I suppose because there was nobody else available, I was sent on a flying errand to Alexandria to purchase two hundred horses for this necessary arm. My instructions were to call on any or all the authorities at Alexandria, naval and military, for any assistance I might require, and to use all despatch in bringing back my beasts. I was to give not more than twenty-five pounds a head, and a credit on the Ottoman Bank was wired for five thousand pounds. Besides the horses for the M. I. several of the Headquarter Staff commissioned me to get extra chargers for themselves at fifty pounds apiece. I went up in the transport *Euphrates*, and on the morning after landing beat up the whole stables of Alexandria, and assembled perhaps a thousand horses in the Square. Here, with the assistance of two veterinary surgeons, I

chose my two hundred in a few hours, in most instances fixing my own price at an average of, I think, about twelve pounds apiece. For Sir John Adye, his son, Colonel Swaine, and others, I bought a few higher priced ones, but it was only for the Colonel that I paid anything approaching the fifty pounds. Curiously enough, his horse—a beautiful, strong-looking, weight-carrying white Arab—was the only one which did not turn out well. One of those I bought, a dark bay called "Bedouin," won numberless races afterwards in Malta. As each horse was bought I registered him with his owner's name, and gave the man a scribbled order on a scrap of paper for his money, which he could cash at the bank. The whole transaction scarcely took three hours. Then seeking the senior transport officer I asked for a ship. There was one just in with mules from Cyprus, but she was very big, and he shook his head at the proposal to send her down to Ismailia with nothing but me and my horses. My orders, however, were imperative, and next morning early we started. But on reaching Port Said, the transport officer there was outraged at the base idea of paying canal dues for such a freight, and ordered me instantly to disembark. I remonstrated mildly, but without avail, and with all my cattle I was deposited on the shore. I said nothing more, but going to the telegraph office wired to head-quarters, and in very quick time orders were given to re-embark me again and send me on, as the horses were a vital question. So I triumphantly again took command and received the thanks and congratulations of everybody at Ismailia on the prompt termination of my mission. What with my cantankerous interpreters and my own duties as interpreter-in-chief, my days were now very full, and I was generally well tired when bedtime came. My arm too was scarcely set, and gave me considerable pain and difficulty, especially in mounting; but the life was exhilarating and fraught with pleasurable excitement. One night, soon after turning in, an orderly roused me with a message to report myself within an hour at head-quarters. It was a dark march as we set out across the

desert in charge of two native guides, who were themselves put under my care. The men knew nothing of their business, and took us a long distance out of our way, and the first thing the light revealed to us was the armoured train of the rebels. They had lately cut off the water supply, and this was a reconnaissance to see what we could do. The mounted infantry under Captain Piggott at once dashed off to attack and try and intercept the train, but could not succeed, as it steamed easily away, fighting as it went. We had besides Piggott's men the York and Lancaster Regiment, and a couple of guns under Captain Hickman—N. Battery, I think it was. The scrimmage with the train of course gave the alarm to the enemy, who were soon visible in considerable force at Mahuta and half-way to Magfar, where we were. Our two guns were drawn up behind a little knoll not far from the railway line, beyond which was a flat piece of open ground between it and the Canal. Sir Garnet Wolseley and the whole of his staff were watching the Egyptian movements in a compact little group on the hillock by the guns when the first puff of smoke came, followed by a scream and a hurtle just over our heads and an explosion behind our backs. This first shell killed an artillery horse, nearly taking off its hind leg, and wounded one of the men. Had it been a shrapnel over that spot very few of the staff could have escaped. As it was, they all very discreetly shifted their quarters without delay. The story of Magfar can be seen in despatches. It was then that Lord Wolseley wrote that it was not consonant with the traditions of the British Army to retreat before Egyptians; but, nevertheless, had the latter come on, it would have been very hard for our little force to hold its ground. Up till noon the labour at the two guns was tremendous, anybody and everybody assisting. Having only come out too with the intention of an early morning reconnaissance before breakfast, nobody had brought provisions, and as the day wore on we suffered a great deal from thirst. The piece of open sand between us and the Canal was incessantly swept by a heavy fire, and finally we cast lots

from time to time as to who should gallop across, slung about with water bottles, and fill them. It fell once to me to do so, and I was extremely pleased when I got back. I think Captains Wardrope and Adye had the same ticklish experience. Though I had already seen and heard a good many shell and bullets whistling "around," as our cousins would put it, I had never before been so deliberately under fire, and I confess that for the first hour or so I did not like it at all. And though I have known a certain amount of battle since, the more I see the less I enjoy it. There is something so beyond all control in the flight of projectiles, especially of a rifle bullet, that I cannot admit any display of courage in pretending to be pleased at fighting it. A stern sense of duty will make any man lead a charge or a forlorn hope, and I am not aware of ever having shirked a hot corner where I was wanted; but any old soldier who says that he is not delighted to find himself alive at the end of a stiff day is either a perverter of the truth, a fool, or tired of life. Nevertheless, the fatalist feeling is inborn with most of us, and at Magfar, late in the afternoon, I fell asleep on the sand with a pipe between my teeth, and waking up, turned over to ask a gunner who had been next me for a fresh light; but he had been carried away wounded by a shell that had not even disturbed my dreams. Later on, Captain Fitzroy arrived on the scene with some Gatlings, and the enemy, who at one time had almost seemed inclined to come to close quarters, sheered off. Just before sunset, too, the Guards appeared, very tired, having had a true British lunch before starting, which caused about half of them to fall out. As it turned to twilight I mounted to ride back, and on the way overtook a solitary horseman wandering in the desert, who, to my surprise, proved to be the Duke of Teck. He had in some manner been separated from the rest, and lost his way. It was extremely lucky that we met, otherwise he might have strolled off into Arâbi's camp; but, as it was, we clapped in our spurs, and regained Ismailia hospitality in time for dinner. The next thing to be done was to

turn the Egyptians out of Tel el Mahuta, where they were strongly entrenched on the banks of the Canal. This was accomplished without much fighting, a few well-directed shells scattering them in all directions out of their works.

Again it was very hot, and the burning thirst that was on us made everybody race for the Canal. Personally, I dipped my face in and drank like a horse, just above the dam they had constructed; but hardly had I done so when orders came that the water was not to be used temporarily, and I was disgusted to see about sixty bodies dragged out from the bed of the Canal, where they had probably been intentionally thrown with a view to poisoning the supply. Then came Kassassin, whither at length the Headquarters pitched their tents three or four days before the final advance on Tel el Kebir. On the 12th I was sent in from Kassassin to Ismailia with despatches, and reached the camp only about five in the evening, somewhat tired with a ride of over forty miles through the sand. I had scarcely reported myself, however, when I was told to be ready at ten o'clock to accompany the General. Ever since I joined his staff Lord Wolseley had made it a rule to keep me close at hand, laughingly saying that Captain Rawson, R.N., who invariably carried a large ship's telescope, was his eye, and Beaman his tongue. Tents were struck soon after dark, and the troops began to take up their allotted positions. The General and staff left Kassassin about half-past ten to ride round the whole army and see that everything was in order. By about midnight this inspection was completed, and several of us lay down to snatch a few moments' sleep if possible, though the night was very cold, as it often is in Egypt at that time of year.

Soon after one, the word was given to attack, and the battle began. Lord Wolseley's own despatches give an account of the action, which it would be presumption to attempt to better. As we crossed the trenches the whole Egyptian army could be seen in the wildest confusion,

flying like ants across the plain in all directions. In Arâbi's tent I found his sword, a fine pair of glasses by Ross, uniforms, and a mass of papers. Putting sentinels on, I rejoined the General on the bridge over the Canal, where he was already penning his report. Giving my horse "Brownie," who had been under saddle the whole of the previous day carrying me to Ismailia and back, to a prisoner to hold, I returned to the field, in obedience to instructions, to see what information I might be able to pick up from the wounded. Some of these were in a most ghastly plight. I came upon one man lying across the railway embankment with a bullet wound through both knees and one thumb, another in the thigh, and a third which had entered his side, glanced off a rib, and flown out through his throat. He made signs of thirst, so I poured some weak brandy and water between his lips; but it trickled down his breast, through the gaping hole in his gullet. I bound this up, and also tore up his shirt and wrapped it tightly round his body, which seemed to afford him relief. He then managed to thank me, and to say that he was just climbing over the permanent way when he was simultaneously hit by the three shots. His case was hopeless; but a few were worth sending in to hospital, where they received every attention. In about an hour I returned to report, when Lord Wolseley told me to mount and accompany General Drury Lowe to Cairo, where my knowledge of the place, people, and language might have been useful. Poor "Brownie" had already had a fair share of work, but I preferred him to "Silvertail," and with "Ay, ay, sir!" turned to obey. But the horse had disappeared. On interrogating the prisoner, he told me a Highlander had taken him away. I at once repaired to the Highland Brigade's mustering-ground, where I found great rejoicing, the men revelling principally in the fruits and breakfasts laid out by the Egyptians for themselves at the moment of the surprise. A big raw-boned sergeant was proudly caracolling about on "Brownie," who evidently did not relish the new hand. I at once ordered the man off, and asked him what he meant by stealing the horse. He

indignantly replied that it was an Egyptian horse he had captured, and pointed to the *Djeem* branded on its flank. This gave some colour to his excuse, as "Brownie" had formerly belonged to the Khedive; but not only was he wearing a Service saddle, but a good bottle of Guinness's stout, which had been in the saddle-bags, was missing. It was not a moment, however, for finding fault, so I swung myself up and went back to the bridge. Here, however, perhaps rather to my relief, Lord Wolseley told me that a mass of telegrams in Arabic had been captured, and perhaps, instead of going on, I had better apply myself to them, so that for most of the rest of that day I was immersed in paper.

Everybody knows how Cairo was captured, and I may pass briefly over the next week, only saying that soon after arrival I heard that Arâbi Pasha was ill at Abbassiyeh, and on my visiting him, found my quondam friend in a very bad way with fever. He was, however, quickly removed from the miserable little guard-house where he lay, and given the best medical attendance awaiting his trial.

For a full account of the proceedings the reader may conveniently be referred to Mr. Broadley's book, *How we defended Arabi.* Before they began, I terminated my service "under the colours," and was again transferred to the Agency. The period I spent in the field will always be one of the pleasantest amongst many pleasant recollections. On my calling to say farewell to Lord Wolseley, he was good enough to ask me in what manner I should like my services under him to be officially recognised. Already numberless decorations, C.M.G.'s and others, were beginning to be showered broadcast upon many who had hardly stirred a finger, and this so disgusted me, that instead of saying I should like one (which perhaps I might not have received), I replied that I wanted nothing whatever—I had been given pay at about Colonel's rate, and wished for no more. The General, however, pressed me to ask for something, and finally I said that, if I must claim a reward, I should be

glad, if possible, to retain the two horses which had carried me through the campaign. A stroke of the pen made them my property, and a couple of nags, with a pair of medals, were all my souvenirs of the war. It was, nevertheless, nobody's fault but my own; though, looking back upon it, I fancy now that I was not wise in my generation.

Scarcely had I quitted my blue tunic when I was attached to Sir Charles Wilson, who was watching the State trial of the rebel Pashas on behalf of the Government. This was no easy duty, as the whole business of the Court was transacted in Arabic, and I was expected not only to translate every document, and each question and answer, but also to pounce upon and denounce any attempt at irregularity. From the first it was an understood thing that the leaders were not to be capitally convicted, and besides attending Sir Charles Wilson, I was permitted to assist Messrs. Broadley and Napier, within certain limits, in *vivâ voce* interpreting between them and the prisoners, and in the translation of important necessary documents which they would not entrust to native talent. This suited me very well, as I was paid, I think, £60 for translating about a score of papers in a few hours. The most dramatic incident in the trial was when some of the accused complained that the chief pipe-bearer of the Khedive had fraudulently obtained admittance to their cells, threatened, and most grossly and disgustingly insulted them, saying that he had been sent to do so by his royal master. As British sentries were over the gates, this was a very serious matter. With great difficulty, and only by the exercise of diplomatic pressure, through Sir E. Malet, the pipe-bearer was compelled to attend Court. He there behaved most insolently, swore an *alibi*, and said that if necessary the Khedive himself would support him. Three or four of the prisoners nevertheless persisted in their story. This alone ought to have been sufficient, according to Moslem law, to carry the point; but the Court was evidently in fear of the Palace. On my suggestion,

therefore, Sir Charles Wilson proposed that both parties should take the oath of Triple Divorce, the most sacred and binding in the faith of Islam, to their statements. If all agreed to do so, the majority obtained credence. The effect of this oath is that the man is *de facto* divorced from his wife or wives, and his children become illegitimate, if he is convicted of falsehood. The prisoners professed their perfect readiness to submit to the ordeal, but the Chiboukjee paled before it. The Court adjourned to consider the question. I have every reason to believe that Sir Charles Wilson spared no effort to have this matter thrashed out, but it did not suit our diplomacy indirectly to blacken the Khedive, and it was allowed to drop, although the impression publicly created by it was most unfavourable.

The entire trial was to my idea more or less of a farce. There were guilty individuals who had incited to rebellion, but most of their acts had been complacently covered by the Khedive or by their superiors. Arâbi, at anyrate, was according to his lights totally innocent. Up to the bombardment he had been moving both with the Khedive and the Sultan. After that, I believe, he always had the approval of Yildiz and the whole country at his back, as against a nominal Khedive in the hands of the Infidels. He simply could not then act otherwise. Having throughout been treated as a belligerent, it was absurd afterwards to talk of him as a rebel. The first test of a rebellion is success, and as far as his rebellion went, if he ever rebelled against the Khedive, he was victorious along the whole line. He could not rebel against Europe, or England, to whom he owed no allegiance. As a dictator his conduct was blameless, and after having been for long in complete and undisputed authority over the land of Egypt, which before and since has always enriched every individual, from the highest officials down to the shadiest adventurers, who have ever had approach to its coffers, he went out of it a beggar, and Arâbi's legal adviser had to buy bread and dates to keep his family from starving. A more

eloquent commentary on the man's thorough honesty and singleness of purpose could not be imagined than was afforded by a visit to the humble house where his family was almost starving. This is a question, however, which has been worn threadbare. Arâbi was only another victim to the needs of international diplomacy.

The entire circumstances, however, so annoyed and vexed me that I determined to quit the service of the Foreign Office. I could not agree with either the ends to which I was employed or the manner in which my special knowledge was used, and I specifically disliked the work and the prospect of spending the best years of my life in some outlandish Turkish vilayet. I daresay I was wrong, but I have not regretted the decision. In view of my approaching resignation, I asked to be taken off the trial duty, and after some difficulties my request was acceded to by Lord Dufferin, who had been sent out as High Commissioner. He expressed regret at my resolve, and even went so far as to try and dissuade me from it. I remained firm, however, and his lordship almost equally so in his refusal to accept my resignation. At length he said that I had better think over it for a while, and in order to give me time to do so, he named me to accompany Colonel Chermside in a tour of inspection of all the prisons of Egypt. On my return, I was invited to dinner, and asked if I had not changed my mind. I was unable to answer in the affirmative, and so was requested to notify the fact in writing, thus closing my official career.[1]

[1] In reply, I received the following despatch, which I only publish because, for some time, a story was most industriously circulated that I had been "kicked out" of the Service :—

"CAIRO, *December* 10, 1882.

"Sir,—I have duly received your letter of the 8th inst., in which you tender your resignation of your appointment as Assistant in H.M.'s Consular Service, and which I have forwarded to Earl Granville.

"In acknowledging your communication, I desire to express my regret that the Embassy at Constantinople should lose your services.

"While attached to Sir E. Malet's staff in Egypt, you have been called

As I had no private means, and less than a hundred pounds in hand, the step I had taken seemed rather a rash one, and it behoved me without delay to devise some way of making money. The one which most naturally suggested itself was to turn my knowledge of Arabic to use. At the present day there are hundreds of officers and others in Her Majesty's Service having a very fluent acquaintance with the language, but at that period I was one of about half a dozen official Britons with a real "possession," as the French call it, of both the written and spoken tongue. One of the rules of the new Egyptian Army was that the English officers should pass an Arabic examination, and I therefore offered to teach and prepare any of them for the test. Amongst my first pupils were Colonel Rundle, now Chief of General Kitchener's Staff, and Colonel Parsons, at the time of writing commanding troops at Suakin. Colonel Taylor, who commanded Lord Wolseley's escort during the war, and afterwards formed the Egyptian cavalry, was also one of my most assiduous scholars, and both he and Parsons secured the £100 bonus for proficiency. Colonel Rundle, I regret to say, never developed any very brilliant linguistic capacities, but he was already quite sufficiently distinguished as a soldier.

At this moment Cairo was full of newspaper correspondents, and the representative of the *Standard* was Mr. V. Chirol, whom I had known previously in Beyrout. Upon his departure, he suggested that I should temporarily keep that paper informed of what was going on, and thus began a connection which has continued ever since with the greatest satisfaction—at least to the writer. After a month's trial, I was offered a regular post as Cairo

upon to execute duties of great responsibility and importance, and on various occasions have been engaged upon very serious affairs.

"These duties you have always discharged with credit, and to the satisfaction of the various persons under whom you have been placed, including Lord Wolseley, Lord Charles Beresford, Sir Charles Wilson, and others, and I have great pleasure in putting on record my appreciation of your zeal and efficiency.—I am, etc. etc.,

"(Signed) DUFFERIN."

correspondent at £50, and, as far as money went, was already in a better position than I could have attained after ten years in the Consular service. Besides my correspondency, I was also entrusted by the condemned rebels with the management of their property, and in the case of Ali Fehmy Pasha, with the guardianship of his daughters, Jemileh and Fatmeh. Three of the exiles, Mahmoud Sami, Abdul 'Al, and Ali Fehmy, possessed good houses, which the Government made strenuous endeavours to confiscate. Ali Fehmy Pasha's little palace had been given with his wife, as her dower, to him by the Khedive, and in order to prevent forcible appropriation, I went to live in it myself, with Mesdemoiselles Jemileh and Fatmeh, in one of the wings. Jemileh was a source of considerable trouble and anxiety to me, and at one time I had great difficulty in preventing her from running away and clandestinely marrying a most undesirable individual. Altogether, I successfully resisted the attack on the property, where I entrenched myself for several years, until at last the Government gave in so far as to admit the right of the Pasha to the house on payment of half the rent to itself. As soon as this arrangement had been completed, I removed to lodgings, as I could not afford to give anything like a reasonable rent myself for one of the finest residences in Cairo,[1] which was quickly let to General Grenfell, and has ever since been held by the Sirdar of the Egyptian Army. The most satisfactory of my Wekilates was that of Mahmoud Sami, who was a rich man, and whose wife, Ain'adeel Khanem, was a clever and reasonable lady, who not only paid me for my trouble over managing her affairs, but from time to time made me handsome presents, such as gold watches, rings, etc. On the whole, though, these trusts were very onerous, and only brought me into perpetual conflict with the authorities, who considered the fallen "rebels" as fair loot. But if my connection with the Arâbi faction made enemies for me in high places, it also brought me dozens of offers from all sorts and con-

[1] The house contains about fifty rooms, large and small, with a beautiful garden, and the water rate alone was over four pounds a month.

ditions of natives who had claims, or wished to be protected against the Government.

The mere fact of being an "English lawyer," the only one in Cairo, was of immense weight, and though I was no barrister, I was entitled legally to represent any parties anywhere except before the Court of Appeal at Alexandria. In a very short time my hands were full of business, and I had to buy a safe to keep my documents and money. One of my chief opponents was Borelli Bey, a clever and urbane Frenchman, chief legal adviser to the Egyptian Government; but though we had many a stiff fight, our relations were always of the best.

To give some idea of the nature of my work at that period, take two days from my Diary, less than a fortnight after I had made my independent start:—

"*Jan.* 10, 1883.—Up six. Tahir people at ten with amended contract, which refused absolutely. Rode see Malet, Sinadino, Adileh Khanem, and Prefect Police. Then Tahirs again, insisting their form contract; I on mine, and showed teeth. Precipitate bolt of young Tahir. Drove station, see Chirol off. Then Ministry Interior. Talk with Procureur Hishmet and Kahil Bey —apparently satisfactory. Promised remove guards Arâbi's house to-morrow. Back home—Arabic class —Taylor and Parsons—Home again, despatched telegram *Standard*. Dined Gardens—To Chermside, where music. Then to Princess Nazli—Prince Kiamil there. Home, 1.30 a.m.

"*Jan.* 11, 1883.—Morning to Interior after Commissioners. Then Daira—Saïd Moussa el Akkâd. To Malet. Lunch Gardens. Settled Tahir contract. Again to Commission. Pigeon-shooting at Ghezireh in my trap. Sent MSS. to Evans to copy. Conversation Sheikh Khalil on atrocities of Ferid Pasha. Case Hassan Sakr. Then saw Cartwright. Cards on Dufferin, Nicolson, Khedive. Dinner Club, Chermside and Schæffer. Opera, 'Madame l'Archiduc.' Supper. Bed, 1."

The same programme substantially went on for the

next three or four months, by which time I had more clients than I knew what to do with. Between the Hakaniyeh and Ibtidaïeh (or Criminal and First Instance native Courts), where I withstood the combined talent of the Arabic Bar, the Ghezireh tennis courts, and racecourse, the Ministries, the Clubs, and the Theatre, I seldom rested a minute from daybreak till midnight. My safe was slowly filling with title-deeds, jewellery, and little bags of gold, and altogether the world went very well then.

Legal work in Egypt, especially before the native Courts, is, or was, usually paid by a percentage or share of moneys recovered. Besides this, however, I made it an invariable rule to insist on some fee deposited in advance by any new client. The following extract from my cash-book will give some idea of the business:—

March 18th.—£500 from Alexandria prisoners.
,, 25th.—£230 ,, ,, ,,
April 11th.—£90 from Hadji Khalifa as retainer for future work.
,, 16th.—£142 and 6 gold bracelets, valued at £60, from Sheikh Mahmoud.
May 18th.—£300 from Sheikh Ibrahim.

In the next chapter I shall deal with the Alexandria Court-Martial, but I may quote here a typical case, such as I had to fight over and over again. Though chronologically it came off somewhat later, it is most convenient, perhaps, to cite it in this place. The facts were as follows:—

Hilmy Pasha, at his death, left three daughters—Emineh, Zeinab, and Teffideh Khanems. Emineh Khanem married Tewfik Pasha, Khedive of Egypt. Zeinab Khanem married his brother, Mahmoud Pasha; and Daoud Pasha Yeghen espoused Teffideh. The latter lady died, leaving her property to be divided amongst her husband and her two sisters, each of the latter inheriting about one hundred thousand pounds in land, and thirty thousand in jewellery. Besides this fortune, Zeinab Khanem possessed property of her own, variously estimated at from

two to three hundred thousand pounds. The Khedive, at the death of Teffideh, took upon himself to administer the share of his sister-in-law, as he said, to satisfy any creditors of the estate, or to prevent her husband's creditors from seizing any part of it, which they would not dare to attempt as long as he, the Khedive, was in charge.

Zeinab Khanem was young and extremely fond of pleasure and of the best and most expensive things of this life, and for several years she went on living recklessly on her own income, leaving the Khedive to encash the revenues of her inheritance. Amongst her hobbies was a passionate liking for horses, dogs, and carriages, not to mention dress and ornaments. As was inevitable, she soon fell into the hands of Jew brokers and old women who go about from harem to harem to pander to the luxurious tastes of the spoiled and independent young princesses. As specimens of how these parasites trimmed their accounts, one man who had lent Zeinab Khanem £250, and procured for her a little brougham, two horses, and three dogs, sent in a claim for £10,000. A certain Madame Morpurgo, who had sold her some furniture and other odds and ends, took her pen and wrote herself down for £28,000, and a dress-maker was modest enough to ask only for £12,000. This was, if I remember, a Madame Coudet, to whom the Princess had entrusted four thousand pounds worth of diamonds to be re-set, which she refused to give up without payment or promissory notes for her absurd bill. At last Zeinab applied to the Khedive to give her some of the money he had encashed from her lands, or to sell some of it for her to enable her to meet her creditors. The reply to her request was that a decree of interdiction was pronounced against her, and Tahir Pasha, keeper of the Khedive's privy purse, was appointed as her guardian. This interdiction is a powerful instrument provided for application to people who are mad or proved to be madly extravagant. In the latter case a schedule of debts has to be signed by the person in

question, or else he or she must appear in person and acknowledge them. As it was perfectly certain that Zeinab Khanem, who was one of the most independent and courageous of all the princesses, would never recognise these debts, Tahir Pasha simply got over the difficulty by forging her seal. One of the most terrible effects of being placed *en état d'interdiction* is that you can neither give nor receive, nor sign your name with validity. You are, in fact, dead and buried alive. It has always been the fashion to represent the late Khedive as a pattern of domestic virtue, but a good many of his relatives looked upon him in quite another light. In this particular case he clearly wished to defraud his sister-in-law out of her whole share of Teffideh Khanem's legacies, and to do so he closed her mouth by employing the most formidable legal engine in existence through his own creature, Tahir Pasha. When it was known that the Khedive himself was in question, no native lawyer cared to take up the case; indeed, the unfortunate Princess was precluded by the fact of being in interdiction from signing a power of attorney. At this time a Polish barrister, Dunin by name, had just arrived in Egypt, and being a very pushing, energetic man, was anxious to make a sensational début, if possible. Knowing nothing, however, of the country or its laws, he came to me and suggested that together we should work the Zeinab claims. It seemed a very hopeless task, but we repaired to the Ghezireh Palace, where she lived, and craved an interview. As can very easily be understood, the Princess was at first very mistrustful, thinking that we might be merely another couple of hawks come to assist in the pluming. We refused to act at all without an absolute power of attorney, which we declared that we would prove valid in spite of the Abdin Palace folk; but Zeinab Khanem hesitated long before she could make up her mind to give such unlimited control over herself to foreign lawyers. Over and over again we were received, and harangued and expostulated with her, till at last she yielded and signed the procuration. Our first act was

then to publish a notice that the interdiction, having been obtained on a forgery, was null and void, and that any persons acting under its authority, either Tahir Pasha or those who received and paid moneys otherwise than through ourselves, would be held responsible, etc. etc. It may be imagined that this notice created an immense sensation, and at the same time we summoned Tahir Pasha to attend Court, have his forgery proved, and answer for his acts under the invalid interdiction. When we presented ourselves, we were of course told by the judges that our powers were *vicieux*, and that we could not appear, since the signature of the Princess had no value. It is needless to enter into details of the desperate struggle that ensued. During its continuance every possible means of intimidation were used against Zeniab Khanem. Butchers and bakers were ordered not to supply her with food, and her horses were left almost starving in the stables, because nobody dared to sell her barley and fodder. For some time the curious spectacle was offered of the Khedive's sister-in-law being kept by an English business man in food for herself and household. Nevertheless, the brave woman never lost heart, and indomitably declared that she would rather die of hunger than give in.

It was a very serious burden upon myself, as, with the exception of Mr. Egerton, then our Minister in Cairo, who sent the Princess a present of some sheep to feed her at the Bairam, without which she would have had empty plates, nobody ventured to come to her assistance, and I had not only to fight her case legally but to finance her large household. At one time, so irritated was the Khedive, that it was noised about he intended to abduct her from her palace, and I applied for cavasses from the British Agency to be put on her gates. The scandal was so colossal that at last the Khedive gave in, the interdiction was quashed, and the Princess became once more a free woman. Her affairs, however, were so complicated that I did not wish to continue the management of them, and after the great victory, I advised her to name

M. Carton de Wiart as her factotum. She did so with the happiest results, and in the end all her property, or most of it, was disgorged, and restored to her. She certainly deserves long to enjoy it, after the plucky stand she made for her rights.

CHAPTER V

BY the first State trial the principal "Rebel Leaders," as they were styled, had been saved from execution and deported for life to Ceylon, where they have since lived in spite of repeated efforts made by their friends to procure permission for them to return. The Khedive's Government was extremely sore at the intervention of foreign counsel, and the consequent check on its vengeance in the case of Arâbi and his colleagues, but it vowed to make the smaller fry pay double penalty. With great difficulty I succeeded in obtaining a procuration signed by Suliman Sami, Military Commandant of Alexandria at the time of the bombardment, Saïd Kandeel, Prefect of Police during the massacres, and subsequently, Saad Abu Gebel, Ahmed Hakky, and four others, to defend them before the Alexandria Court-Martial, or to name a counsel to do so if I should deem it necessary. Armed with this document, I at once applied for access to the prisoners, for the purpose of preparing my defence. This was on the 13th March 1883. My request was, as I had expected, refused without delay, and it was stated that no foreign lawyers would be admitted in the court. Thereupon I immediately applied to Sir E. Malet, and at the same time to Lord R. Churchill and Mr. W. S. Blunt, both of whom had promised to use their influence in England on behalf of these men. Nubar Pasha resisted for some time every effort, official and private, but on the 20th it was agreed that *properly qualified* counsel might defend. I therefore telegraphed to the Honourable Mark Napier, asking him if he would undertake the brief for a sum of £250 for the month of April, with all expenses paid. This he consented to do, and arrived in Cairo on the 30th. The whole of April, however,

passed in fruitless endeavours to bring off the trial, as the Government, though profuse in their declarations of readiness, invariably met every fresh demand to name a day by saying that the *dossiers* were not yet prepared. Consequently, after spending a pleasant time with me, Mr. Chirol, who was out there again, and other friends, Mr. Napier pocketed his fee, and went back to England, leaving me again single-handed.

All through May I was frequently running up to Alexandria to interview my clients, though as no charge had as yet been preferred, we were working rather in the dark. It was not till the first week in June that the Court announced that it would open on the 15th, and communicated the indictment. Most of the prisoners were accused of treason with a request for the death penalty, and excitement at once began to run high. Borelli Bey, who had a great deal to do with the case, assisted me materially at this juncture, and I believe secretly sympathised in a fashion with the prisoners. I remember his saying to me, "*Je donnerais ma demission pour defendre Suliman Sami. C'est mon rêve.*" His meaning was that if Arâbi had been let off, Suliman Sami, who had acted under Arâbi's orders, must necessarily be guiltless. Borelli Bey had felt very keenly the triumph of Messrs. Broadley and Napier, and had he had to defend Suliman, his line would have been to attack the verdict which had acquitted Arâbi, on whom he would have attempted to throw all the blame. As it was, there was clearly a fixed determination *per fas et nefas* to make this second batch the scapegoats of the first. Indeed it was not long before I received good information that all the members of the court-martial had already, before the sitting began, or before they had any official knowledge of the cases, sworn on the Koran to condemn them all to death. I immediately reported this in writing and challenged the whole Court, which was dissolved and reconstituted in consequence, though the new members doubtless were imbued with exactly the same *animus*, if they had not sworn the same oath. The expenses

attendant on the defence were very large, as a number of clerks and translators had to be employed; and I was kept continually travelling between Cairo and Alexandria, not to mention daily telegraphing to London, the cost of which was generously borne by Mr. Blunt. On the 14th June a mine was sprung upon me in the shape of an entirely new indictment, and also an intimation that I should not be allowed to cross-examine witnesses. This called forth another vigorous protest from the defence, and a grand preliminary skirmish, in which honours were pretty evenly divided.

At the last moment Suliman Sami seemed disinclined to confirm his procuration, and I discovered that agents from the Government had been secretly admitted to him and had tried to persuade him not to employ an English counsel, saying that he would only endanger his case by so doing, and that if he simply trusted to the "clemency of the Khedive," he would have nothing to fear. The wretched man likewise objected to my demands in the matter of fees. He was possessed of very considerable wealth, and was by far the richest of them all. I had fixed a sum for each in proportion to his means, defending one for nothing, and taking merely nominal amounts from others. But from Suliman Sami I refused to accept less than £2000. He bargained and haggled over this, offering £1000, then £800 plus a house on the Mahmoudieh Canal valued at about £1200, and so on until I lost patience, and told him plainly that unless defended his life was not worth a piastre, but that he was the best judge of the price of saving it. As far as I was concerned, he might hang with my best wishes. He was a surly, ill-conditioned creature, and in reality I cared very little what he decided. Finally he opined that he would trust to Providence and the Khedive, and told me so. Before it was light next morning he was taken to the Court, tried and sentenced with alarming celerity, and led out to execution. On the way through the streets a friend of his managed to pass him some poison, and he was already almost if not quite dead before the noose was arranged

about his neck. This judicial murder caused a great sensation, and caused a most animated debate in the House of Commons. It also served largely to protect the remaining prisoners from anything similar by the horror it aroused. In fact, subsequent proceedings degenerated into a series of wrangles between the Court and the defence, and actual trial there can scarcely be said to have been. A resolute attempt was made to fix the entire responsibility for the Alexandria massacres upon Saïd Bey Kandeel, Prefect of Police, under the new indictment, but I met this as Borelli Bey would have met the charge against the defunct Suliman Sami, by throwing any blame there might have been on the shoulders of his superior, Omar Pasha Loutfy, the Governor-General of Alexandria, and a creature of the Palace. The Court absolutely refused to allow me to cross-examine their witnesses in any sense tending to inculpate Omar Pasha, and so exculpate Saïd Bey. They also declined to call Omar Pasha himself and submit him to examination. On the 28th June a tremendous scene occurred in Court, and I declared that the whole trial was a farce under such conditions, and that I should throw up my brief and refer the matter to the British Government, which had promised my clients a fair hearing and justice, and would certainly see that they got it. The Court was aghast, and after a heated argument for another hour or so, adjourned, I think it was the next day that the most serious charges were tacitly abandoned, and a sort of compromise arrived at whereby all the prisoners were condemned to short terms of imprisonment only—a termination which filled them with grateful astonishment and perfectly satisfied me, though it was an intense disappointment to those who had confidently reckoned on capital sentences. It was towards the close of the court-martial that cholera broke out at Rosetta and Damietta. The *Standard* wished me forthwith to proceed to one or other of these places, but my duty to my wretched clients, who would inevitably have met the same fate as Suliman Sami if left to themselves, precluded my doing so. Mr. Mudford, thinking

probably that this was merely an excuse for not facing the cholera, briefly informed me by telegraph that if I preferred my own interests to those of the paper, I had only to name a date for our connection to cease. I replied by naming a week from that day. As soon, however, as sentence was delivered, I took the first train back to Cairo, where the disease had just declared itself with great virulence. I had already asked Mr. Clere, who formerly used to correspond for the *Standard*, to send a message or two pending my arrival, and on reaching the capital I found he had already despatched two lengthy wires of more than a column. I fully expected remonstrances from London, but if my tenure of the post in Cairo was so soon to cease, I resolved to go out like a rocket, and so continued to send the most detailed and gruesome accounts of what was going on. There was at least no lack of material, and furthermore, I was the only real correspondent left in Cairo, all the rest, in common with the mass of foreign residents, having fled precipitately at the first alarm. Entreaties and threats from the other end of the wires were useless to restrain them, and I was left alone in possession of the field. Such good use did I make of the opportunity that when the date fixed arrived, and I telegraphed asking to whom I should hand over my charge, Mr. Mudford replied most eulogistically, and begged me to continue as his representative. This is the only occasion on which I have ever had any friction with my kind and esteemed chief, who has always treated me rather as a friend than an employer, and whom I have to thank for numberless acts of generosity and consideration. The epidemic raged with intense violence for nearly a month, and gradually died out by degrees, the first day on which no deaths occurred being the 23rd August. During this period I was working day and night, visiting hospitals and cholera camps, cemeteries, and private houses, and assisting as best I could the cholera committees formed to combat the foe. As might have been expected, I was before long attacked myself; but though I suffered acute pain for a while, the bout was not a serious one, and was

over in a day or two. Two of my servants died, and the quarter of Bab el Look, in which I lived, was one of the most severely tried. This was my first experience of cholera, but since then I have often been face to face with this much-dreaded enemy. My own theory, based on an experience far larger than that of most doctors, is that when an epidemic is in full swing, everybody who is in contact with the sick necessarily absorbs a certain quantity of the germs. It will almost always be found when cholera is about that men suffer from intestinal disorders. This is cholera in an incipient form. If the constitution is strong enough it throws off the quantity of germs it has assimilated. If, on the contrary, it is weak naturally, or run down by fatigue or worry, cholera declares itself in an acute form. The strongest and finest constitution may, of course, succumb to a sufficient dose of germs, but with ordinary precautions, especially as to water, one need not absorb any very dangerous amount. Water, after being boiled well, should at once be placed in stoppered bottles. It is perfectly useless to leave it in decanters or open jugs where dust charged with germs can and will almost immediately contaminate it afresh. In civilised places it is much better to drink only mineral waters, and, it may be added, to use the same for brushing one's teeth, as there are many people illogical enough most carefully to boil water they intend to mix with whisky, but to use the raw article unconcernedly for toilet purposes. The most usual cholera medicine is raw or burnt brandy, with ginger and laudanum, to be taken after a preliminary dose of castor oil has been successfully exhibited. Really good pure opium half-grain pills taken at intervals are also useful, and, together with ginger tabloids, can always be easily carried in the pocket. A bad case, though, when the epidemic is at its apogee, leaves very little room for treatment or hope. Of course there are recoveries, but they are few and far between. There will always be some days when every seizure almost proves fatal. These generally occur about a fortnight after the commencement of a visitation. The forms taken by cholera are very

various, and during this Cairo cholera of 1883 cramps and spasms were seldom absent. In Russia in 1892 they were less remarkable, and in the Soudan in 1896 it was quite exceptional for a patient to suffer the agony generally associated with the idea of this malady. Then there was nothing but a sudden collapse, defying all counteracting medicines; though it was noticed that in the case of Europeans accustomed to spirituous liquors large draughts of brandy had scarcely any corresponding reviving effect, whereas with natives much smaller doses would occasionally produce at least temporary restoration of vitality and energy. As a rule, when once collapse has set in, there is small prospect of recovery. The whole system seems paralysed, and first the extremities and then the trunk grows icy cold. It is a curious physiological phenomenon that a body, cold as marble whilst still instinct with life, grows warm soon after death has ensued from cholera. I had often heard this stated, and put it to the proof in Russia when visiting one of the cholera wards. A patient still breathing had no warmth whatever in his frame, and touching him was as if one had touched a stone. Half an hour later, coming through the same ward, his face was covered, but on placing my hand on his chest, it communicated an ordinary human degree of heat. Dr. Botkin, who was with me, assured me that he had often observed this circumstance. One of the chief predisposing causes to cholera must certainly be considered to be fear. I have known several instances where the individual simply frightened himself into his grave. *Per contra*, the best preventive is cheerful company and a stiff backbone. In this connection the services rendered in Cairo by an Italian dramatic troupe which used to play through the whole of the summer in the Ezbekieh Gardens can hardly be exaggerated. All round the gardens huge sulphurous bonfires were burning in the streets, and the city was a veritable city of the dead and dying, yet these brave and merry sons and daughters of Italy provided laughter and amusement night after night for all who cared to come and listen. It may be thought that this was not exactly

a time when men wished to laugh; but on the contrary, it is on just such times that they loathe sitting in twos and threes, with a conversation inevitably recurring to the horrors they have been witnessing all day, and anything which offers a chance of momentary forgetfulness by transporting them in thought elsewhere is a real boon and blessing. When it was all over I thought I might take a holiday, and in September came home to England for a month or so. One of my first visits was to Lord R. Churchill, where I met the other members of the Fourth Party, then a prominent political factor. It was suggested to me to stand for Parliament, but that was never one of my ambitions; and though during my stay I saw many public men, and had interesting conversations with one and another, principally on the Egyptian question, I very soon grew tired of London with its rain and fog, and it was with no regret that I soon found myself back at Bab el Look in my own, or rather in Ali Fehmy's, house.

There had been several changes in my absence, and Sir Evelyn Baring had taken the place of Sir E. Malet, whilst Sir E. Vincent had put on the cloak of Sir A. Colvin, and Mr. Clifford Lloyd had established himself at the Interior. I lost no time in calling upon the new-comers, and during the whole of my residence in Egypt I met with nothing but the most unvarying kindness and support from my official countrymen. In Lord Cromer it very soon became evident that the Egyptians had found a master mind and hand to direct them. Sir E. Malet belonged to the old régime, which was a thing of the past, with all its faults and mistakes. Lord Dufferin was a transitory power, a shooting star which left a brilliant track behind, but he had scarcely stayed long enough to create any very lasting impression. A more subtle, refined intellect probably does not exist to-day than that of the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava, and a more kindly nature or more winning manner no diplomat of our time possesses. But somehow the Orientals, whilst they could not help enjoying and admiring him, always, I think, failed to trust him, imagining it

quite impossible that anybody could be half as nice and charming as he always seemed. I know that at Constantinople the Sultan did not at all care for Mr. Goschen, but when Lord Dufferin came, his opinion was the "Ketcheh yuzli" (the "goat-faced"—the Turks always have a nickname for all and sundry) was beyond him. Mr. Goschen he could definitely understand and dislike: Lord Dufferin he never understood, and therefore disliked him all the more.[1] There can, however, seldom if ever be any difficulty in comprehending Lord Cromer, and though at first he was perhaps not altogether popular, he has now firmly won universal regard and very general affection. Sir Edgar Vincent must naturally have had a considerable reputation to obtain the important and enviable post of Financial Adviser, but it was in Egypt that he gained his best laurels. Mr. Clifford Lloyd, on the other hand, was already a veteran, but in his long struggle against Egyptian abuses he had to contend not only against the native officials but also against many fellow-countrymen whose ideas did not coincide with his own. The result was unfortunate, and after fighting gallantly for a while he preferred to resign rather than modify his personal and very decided views. At the last it was in fact a question between his or Nubar

[1] When Sir H. Drummond Wolff was negotiating the Convention every effort was being made to induce the Sultan to send troops to Egypt. Lord Dufferin, then Ambassador, employed all his eloquence to this end, and a decisive council of Ministers was held one afternoon on the subject. Instead of sending his chief dragoman, the Ambassador himself, accompanied by two of his secretaries, went to the Ministry to hear the result. The Council was sitting, and hour after hour passed; but though he allowed his secretaries to go to dinner, Lord Dufferin himself waited on. At length Kurd Saïd Pasha, then Minister of Foreign Affairs, came out and informed our representative that it was with the greatest regret that the Sultan had not found it possible to meet the wishes of H.M.'s Government.

"Well!" exclaimed Lord Dufferin, "you may be pleased to think that you have ruined my reputation as an honest man—but *you have made my name as a diplomatist.*"

What was meant was that nobody would believe but that Lord Dufferin, whilst avowedly counselling the despatch of troops, had so given the advice as to lead to its rejection. It was not the case—but that undoubtedly was the impression.

Pasha's withdrawal, and as England had greater need for Nubar than for Clifford Lloyd, it was the latter who was compelled to retire. I think it is Sir A. Milner who says that Clifford Lloyd's objects were always right and his methods always wrong, and this accurately sums up the reasons of his fall, which was much to be regretted as a palpable blow to British influence in conflict with the Egyptian Ministry. It was, however, unavoidable ; indeed, the friction all round when the new English reform machinery was set in motion was tremendous alike in Finance, Justice, Interior, Sanitation, and Police. The exceptions were perhaps the army and brilliantly the public works, under Sir C. Moncrieff. The progress of Egypt is, however, no part of the scheme of the present modest volume, especially as anybody who wishes for a masterly, and at the same time delightful, history of the British occupation need only buy Sir A. Milner's book.

I had not been back very long before trouble began to break out in the Soudan, and in February came the news of Baker Pasha's Teb following on the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's army at Shekan in the first week of November 1883. The tale of El Teb is indeed a pitiful one. Before starting on that ill-fated expedition, Baker Pasha, whose acquaintance I had made when he was commanding the Turkish camp at Maslak, with the Russians enveloping Constantinople, informed me of his intention. Being on terms of some intimacy, I ventured to remonstrate on the rashness of taking an undisciplined and badly armed force of police and recruits against foes like the dervishes, remarking that it was almost certain death for him and them. His reply was simply—

" I can only die once ; the sooner the better."

Later on when I started and parted with a newspaper of my own, I wrote a series of sketches on public characters, amongst which was the following picture of Baker :—

" Baker Pasha, though he is not of the race of prophets, shares their common fate, and is without honour in his

own country. In the Eastern exile, however, which he has imposed upon himself, he enjoys the high esteem of the lands of his adoption, and perhaps his quiet mind can afford to look with something like content on the smiles of the smug, whose mouths have held a silver spoon and a slippery tongue from the birth.

"Whilst he has acquired much of the appearance and outward manner of the Turk, Baker has retained the solid qualities of the English gentleman, and the habit of command belonging to a British officer. His distinguished services during the Russo-Turkish War are too well known to need recapitulation, and most people think he made a mistake in leaving Constantinople for Cairo. The step was certainly a hurried one, and was extremely displeasing to the Sultan. But Baker had been led to believe that he would be entrusted with the command of the Egyptian Army, and at that time the bait was tempting. His expectations were disappointed by the nomination of Sir Evelyn Wood, and Baker was only given the gendarmerie and police. The story of his experiences in the capacity he now fills is not a pleasing one; not a creditable one to anybody concerned except Baker himself. It is the narrative of a continuous uphill fight against the old abuses of an old system, wherein Baker has had to face not only native prejudices, but, we are sorry to say, English jealousies. And where he looked for support to the Foreign Office the bruised reed pierced his hand, as it generally does the unhallowed hands of all except its special protégés. Baker having been given the task of reorganising the police, everybody at once set about helping him in the job, on the principle that in Egypt other people are generally more fit for the work than those specially trained to it, *vide* several existing instances. The Domains and Daïra, two gigantic farming and planting businesses, are administered by an Indian Civil servant and an ex-Vice-Consul from Milan. The post of Financial Adviser is given to an ex-Guardsman, the Directorship of Prisons to a London doctor, and the Slave Trade is to be checked by a gentleman who

travelled in Asia Minor, and never did anything else in particular except marry a relation of Nubar Pasha. These may be very good appointments (notably in two cases I believe they have been proved so), but the system encourages everyone to think he can do everything. And so Baker, who could have organised the police very well if he had been left alone, was perpetually thwarted by other people who thought they knew more about it. The result has been very much what we might have expected, a strange mêlée of good and bad, and a general feeling of uncertainty as to what the next move may be. Hitherto the police have seen curious vicissitudes, the most extraordinary phase of which was Baker's Suakin expedition. Hicks Pasha with his army having been annihilated, and Osman Digna becoming rather a nuisance on the Red Sea Coast, Sir Evelyn Wood was invited to go down and 'smash' him. The Egyptian Army, however, did not feel up to the mark just then, and Sir E. Wood declined the offer with thanks. Hereupon Baker was summoned, and though it was only a month or so previously that the greatest stress had been laid on the fact that the police was a non-military body, in every sense of the word, he was asked if he would take down his latest batch of recruits and fight the army's battles. With more valour than discretion Baker threw himself into the breach, and decided at once to go, urged on, I cannot help thinking, by the consideration of how personally sweet it would be if success should attend his forlorn venture. Meanwhile, the army looked on with mingled feelings. Baker's success would have been a very bitter pill to swallow, but having refused to tackle Digna themselves they could not complain if somebody else offered. The story is a most melancholy one, and we may pass over the disaster and the ugly recriminations which ensued as briefly as possible. Baker himself knew that nothing short of a miracle could save him, but he was desperate. He had very little to lose and he lost it, but he gained the reputation at least of being always 'ready, aye ready' when called upon.

"When the second campaign was begun, Baker again

went to Suakin, and gave his services to the British General ungrudgingly, merely for the pleasure of giving them and of fighting. The welcome shown to him by his old regiment, which he met for the first time after so many years, must have been especially gratifying to the old soldier, the more so that it was the only recognition vouchsafed to him by his compatriots of his work at the front. All that he has got to remember the plains of El Teb by is the bonniest decoration a man can show, which money cannot buy nor favour procure, a deep, wide scar in the face.

"As a commander, Baker is well known to the world; as an administrator, comparatively few come into contact with him, and fewer still of the outsiders hear much about him. He is a firm disciplinarian and a good chief, looked up to with more than ordinary respect by his subordinates. He is very fond of his own way, and generally gets it, except when the implacable Budget is brought to bear upon him. Having long since learnt to know what this means, Baker wisely refuses to kick against the pricks, and the Budget is the only enemy before whom he retreats, recognising the disparity of forces. In other matters Baker will allow as much discussion as others wish, merely calling for frequent cups of coffee and emptying his silver cigarette-case. But after the other side has had its say, Baker starts afresh from his original proposition, brushing aside and disregarding the arguments which the adversary had fondly hoped were making such a vivid impression, and never yielding an inch of the ground taken up."

From the same source I reproduce the following sketch of Nubar:—

"'Huic maxime putamus malo fuisse, nimiam opinionem ingenii atque virtutis sui.'—CORN. NEPOS.

"The words chosen for the heading were applied to Themistocles the Athenian some two thousand years ago. They fairly represent popular opinion of Nubar the Armenian at the present time. There are a good many points of

similarity between the two statesmen, in their natures and in their lives, but we hope the parallels may not be drawn out together to the end, for, as everyone knows, Themistocles was accused of peculation and ostracised. He then went over to the enemies of his country, and plotted with Artaxerxes against Greece, finally dying, poisoned by his own hand.

"Themistocles, says one of his biographers, was a man 'of great talents and little morality'; Nubar is a man of small talents and great immorality. But let it be distinctly understood what is meant by the foregoing phrase. Not that Nubar is endowed with a small amount of talent, but with a considerable collection of small talents. The greater and higher talents he has never possessed. In the same way Nubar scorns petty immorality. His scale of moral character is calculated on large bases. It is not worth his while to sin in small things. But it is when immorality grows so great that its perpetration calls for no common courage to undertake it that Nubar becomes a hero in his own eyes, though perhaps a sinner in ours, by boldly facing contingencies. If the courage required to perpetrate this greater immorality is rare, the quality required to denounce it is rarer, and herein lies the immunity. And so I repeat, Nubar is not a man of small morality, but rather of portentous immorality, at a pinch. Those who know him well enough will not question the truth of this, and those who do not may take it for granted that the words are not lightly written. Needless to add that I speak of political not private morals.

"If he is pleased to meet you, or wishes you to think so, Nubar Pasha is one of the pleasantest men the world contains. He will ask your opinion as if he valued it above pearls, he will listen to it as if you were the mouthpiece of the Delphic oracle, and he will laugh at you for one more dupe to his superior knowledge of human nature, whilst you are retailing to your friends that Nubar is the most intelligent Oriental you have ever met. Nubar has long since learnt the value of words exactly. They are very cheap with him, and he can buy a good deal out of

them. He has not yet learnt the full value of silence. He lives entirely in the present, and cares not a jot for the future—whether the future of to-morrow or the future of years. His nature is so many-sided that it needs a dozen different lights of different strengths, and from various points, to show up the bright parts and the shadows. The perpetual object of Nubar's existence is to show the right sides and to keep the wrong ones dark. From long practice in this juggling he succeeds in nine cases out of ten, and the spectator retires from the show dazzled with the radiance of his shining. Now and then, nevertheless, a ray penetrates where it was not wanted, and an unbeliever goes out from the presence. But what is one amongst so many?"

. . . . . .

"The outer man gives little clue to the real one. A ruddy face with grey moustache and grey hair escaping from the tarboosh always pushed over the left ear, which is deaf, to give a better chance to the right one, which hears, when it wants to—such is the countenance of Nubar. A kindlier and more paternal smile it would be difficult to imagine. And he is a kind-hearted man, always ready to do a good turn if it does not compromise him in any way. He is a staunch friend too towards a chosen few, but he has not many real friends amongst those of his own rank. One great blot in his life must always be the attitude taken by him towards the ex-Khedive Ismail, who, whatever his faults may have been, created Nubar.

"The Pasha is a good farmer and thoroughly understands agriculture, as practised in Egypt, being, moreover, always ready to take up any European improvement, or invention likely to turn out an improvement. He is fond of remarking, with a sigh, that he longs for the day when he shall lay down the burden of the cares of State, and betake himself to his *Abadieh*. There, instead of being bullied by Sir E. Baring, and worried more or less by everybody, he will take a well-earned rest, broken only by a daily inspection on the back of his favourite donkey. He is a director of waterworks, and will discourse learnedly

on the Cairo waterwork system to anyone who will listen. His pet delusion is that he is a jurist, and that he framed the Codes which are (not) in force. As Minister of Justice he would do better, we cannot help thinking, in allowing people who know something about law to remodel the administration, rather than in sticking to the old order of things, because he imagines it his creature. On this subject, however, it is hopeless to approach him. To sum up: Nubar is clever in small things, and takes credit for cleverness in bigger ones by his very mental agility in the minor. He is an almost unerring judge of men, and it is very difficult to deceive him. He is a good master and not a bad servant, but extremely unsatisfactory in any other than these two relations. He is genial, and a pleasant, witty talker, but his information on most subjects is superficial. As soon as he finds that his interlocutor knows the subject better than he does, he is apt to change the conversation. Except on the rare occasions when he is completely in a bad temper, he is courteous and chatty alike to friends and strangers, at his home or in the Ministry. He speaks Turkish, Arabic badly, French well, and English a little. As long as he remains in power he will retain a fair share of popularity, for he does not abuse his position. When he retires to his Arcadian farm he will not be much missed. But England will lose in him one of the best allies she ever had in Egypt."

The above lines were written in 1884, but the description still applies. When in Cairo last year I left a card on Nubar Pasha, and two hours afterwards received a little note saying how delighted he would be to see me again, and that there would always be a place for me at his table whenever I cared to come to lunch or dinner. Next day I returned to see my old friend, who had not changed more than might be expected in the lapse of years, and if somewhat frailer than of yore, still as cheerful and cordial as ever.

After this lengthy digression, I return to the beginning of 1884. In January Gordon arrived quietly and unostentatiously on his last mission. He had always had

a great and simple affection for the Khedive Ismail, and used to say that he never lay down to rest without remembering his old master in his prayers. When he reached Suez, Teufik Pasha sent down his Grand Master of Ceremonies, Zulfikar Pasha, to meet him and the Marquis of Ripon. Gordon, however, refused to shake hands with Zulfikar, and would not allow Lord Ripon even to go off in the boat sent for them. He also addressed a letter to the Khedive, adorned with a pen-and-ink sketch of two black men being flogged, reproaching him with being a bad son and an unjust man, and winding up with a remark that his sin would surely find him out. He only stayed two days in Cairo, and I saw him but once. That was at the British Agency, where his ancient enemy, Zobeir Pasha, had been called to meet him. Lord Cromer, I believe, acted as a sort of arbitrator between them, and they parted practically reconciled. Later on we know that Gordon cancelled the decree prohibiting the slave trade, which so many of his years had been devoted to suppressing, and urgently recommended the despatch of Zobeir, the king of slave-dealers, as the only means of stemming the current of Mahdism. The opponents of slavery, however, were too powerful, and his request was refused. This was the death-knell of the Khartoum garrison, and we in Cairo at once recognised Gordon's danger. The sickening story of the delay in sending up the relief expedition, in spite of the repeated and strenuous representations of Lord Cromer on the value, not only of weeks but of days, has already been told and retold. The whole truth, however, will probably never be known, and the blame equitably apportioned, unless Lord Cromer himself chooses to publish it.

CHAPTER VI

I HAVE already mentioned Mr. Clere as having represented me for a day or two at the commencement of the cholera outbreak as correspondent for the *Standard.* He has lately published his own reminiscences over his real name, which sufficiently show his restless, yet vigorous character. He came to me one day with the proposal to start a newspaper in Cairo. I objected, that beyond telegraphing, and an occasional piece of descriptive letter-writing or criticism, I knew nothing whatever of journalism, much less of the management of a printing office. Clere, however, to adhere to the *nom de guerre* by which he was always known in Egypt, was quite confident in our joint ability to run the paper, and undertook to oversee all the technical part of the business. As for printing, we could have it printed for us. This was contrary to my ideas, for I foresaw endless possible difficulties in giving out the work; and after considerable discussion and examination of ways and means, we decided "in principle" (what a delightful qualifying phrase that is!) to have our own press. Clere was to bring into the concern his knowledge and energy, and I was to find everything else. Though I had every belief in his capacity and good faith, I reserved to myself the most complete control over the paper, taking Clere on at a salary of, I think, £50 a month as sub-editor. Though older than myself, he agreed most good-humouredly, and entered into the preliminaries with all the zest of a schoolboy. Young as I was in years, a little more than half-way between twenty and thirty, I felt at this period far more aged than at the present day, and all the enthusiasm for the new venture was entirely supplied by Clere. We kept our own counsel for some time, and it

was not until the official application was made to the Government for permission to bring out a daily paper in English and French that anything was known about it. Here is the birth certificate of the *Times of Egypt*:—

" Direction du Contentieux
des
Ministères de Finances
et de l'Intérieur.
No. 4007.

LE CAIRE, 1 *Juillet* 1884.

" MONSIEUR.—J'ai soumis à Son Excellence le Ministre de l'Intérieur la demande que vous avez adressée à S.E. Nubar Pasha, Président du Conseil des Ministres, et Ministre des Affaires Etrangères, pour être autorisé à ouvrir une Imprimerie européenne au Caire, et à publier en langue française et anglaise un journal politique quotidien ayant pour titre *The Times of Egypt.*

" En présence des engagements formels que vous avez pris devant M. le Gérant de l'Agence et Consulat Général Britannique, et des déclarations de M. Egerton, le Ministre a bien voulu vous accorder l'autorisation que vous sollicitez, et m'a chargé de vous en donner l'avis.

" S.E. a bien voulu également, à titre exceptionel, vous dispenser de verser les cautionnements préscrits par les Art. 1 et 12 de la loi sur la Presse du 26 Mai 1881. Mais il est entendu que cette faveur cessera en cas d'une contravention et que dès lors vous serez tenu de verser sans delai, et sur une simple requisition de l'Administration les dits cautionnements, ainsi que le montant des amendes que vous aurez pu encourir.—Veuillez agréer, etc. etc.

C. COLUCCI."

The announcement of the approaching appearance of the *Times* was met with a storm of ridicule and pitying prophecies of the fate in store for it. But this only had the effect of making us more obstinately determined to try and achieve a real success. After consulting various technical authorities, we resolved to turn the ground floor of the house I was occupying into offices, and at once set about making a solid foundation to support the weight of

the press. Clere had discovered a machine which one of the Khedivial family in a fit of caprice had ordered out, but had never even unpacked, and which had been sequestered for some debt or other. It was a very fine one, and must have cost over £300. By exercise of diplomacy, though, we managed to secure it for, I think, £120. It was not of the usual Marinoni type, and we had great difficulty in putting it together, but at last we listened with satisfaction hard to depict at the smooth swish of its big wheel in perfect working order. As a foreman, or *prôte d'imprimerie*, we secured a very practical and honest, hard-working Frenchman, M. Joblin by name, who entered into our plans heart and soul, and contributed very largely to surmounting the formidable difficulties of our commencement, which were enough to discourage almost any man.

To begin with, I ordered a large and beautiful fount of type from Stephenson & Blake, but again the local compositors were not familiar with this species, being altogether educated to Marinoni and foreign material. Besides which, none of them knew English, and had to compose like machines, letter by letter. The first proofs which used to come in were such as have probably seldom, if ever, been seen, and they had often to be corrected as many as six or seven times. In the attempt to get together a staff of "comps," and to train them, nearly a month of incessant practice was wasted, and even then we undertook to publish the first number with great misgivings. As for the French part, I advertised for skilled translators, "with a thorough knowledge of English and French," and received about forty applications. I soon weeded these down to five or six, and then set them a column of the *Standard* to translate, sitting down myself at the same time. My translation was finished nearly a quarter of an hour before the quickest of theirs, and I placed them all in separate envelopes and sent them by hand to M. Camille Barrère, then French Minister, with a verbal request for him to be good enough, if he did not mind the trouble, to pick out the best. He returned me my own, and as he was a faultless English

scholar as well as a French *littérateur*, his judgment was not likely to be wrong on such a point. I hesitated considerably before undertaking to translate a sheet a day, most of which I had also written first in English, but as it would save me something like £30 a month, I became my own translator as well as editor, leader writer, and business manager. Clere used to go out for an hour or two generally between ten and twelve, to get items of news, and the rest of the day he would be writing short notes, and hard at the endless correction of proofs. Happy English editors, with a huge competent staff of reporters, subs, readers, and all the rest, may possibly form some faint idea of what it means to combine all these functions, together with those of translator, cashier, and manager, in the persons of two poor wretched youngsters. Nevertheless, we met with a good deal of encouragement, in the way of subscriptions promised and taken, and advertisements, and at last Cairo was placarded with notices from our own press, heralding the advent of the *Times of Egypt*. As well as I remember it was the 1st of August.

In spite of all our almost superhuman labour, the first issue was a monument of typographical pie. The *Bosphore Egyptien* waxed hilarious over the truly amusing and colossal blunders, and if the paper was bought for nothing else, it sold during the first week for the sake of its miserable and comical deficiencies. It used to come out about five or six in the evening, and then the weary proprietor and sub-editor would betake themselves to Santi's Restaurant in the Ezbekieh, and in some leafy corner eat humble pie. Neither of us, however, ever thought of giving in for a moment, and the more we were laughed at, the stouter grew our hearts and the stiffer our necks. By the end of August, though, we were beginning to improve the look of the *Times* very considerably, and as it had, for an Egyptian paper, an extraordinary amount of news, especially of war correspondence from the front, together with rather outspoken leading articles and paragraphs, things took a livelier aspect. Furthermore, the Headquarter Staff required their General Orders, which

were very voluminous, printed daily, and their own little hand press was not fit for this. I, therefore, alone could help them, as no other press could do English work, and, borrowing a few soldier-compositors, whom I paid by the piece, we used, as soon as the *Times* was off the machine, to tackle the orders. Before long the superiority of the "Britannia Press," as we called ourselves, was recognised, and several of the Ministries patronised us, so that in September the grinding of the wheels, and the grunting of the Arabs turning them, went on from dawn to dark, and from dark to dawn. In spite of the enormous initial expenses caused by inexperience and blunders, our balance was very little, if at all, on the wrong side at the end of August, and by the beginning of October we had a clear profit of about £200. The next three months brought in close on £1000 clear; but this is anticipating.

No sooner had the rest of the local Press recognised that the laugh was coming round to our side than every device was used to break us. In Cairo, papers are sold, as elsewhere, by little street-boys. We gave ours badges, and the rival boys, together with organised gangs of roughs, systematically bullied and beat our vendors, and chased them back to the office. This went on for some time, till we met force with force, and had our protection gangs. Finding that the sale could not be prevented, they next tried suborning our compositors, and we were confronted with strike after strike, although our men were paid nearly twice the usual wages. By hook and by crook, though, we always managed to bring out our evening issue, and gradually replaced our black sheep by importing men from Malta and Cyprus. We also found many skilful workers amongst the soldiers, who would come as soon as they were free, and stick to the frames for hours—often all night. One "Tommy" earned as much as £50 in one month by night-work, and most of my British compositors bought their discharges. I also had one Italian, who must seldom have made less than £30 a month. In October, Sir Evelyn Baring suggested the addition of an Arabic sheet to combat the attacks

of the *Abram* and other native papers. Again, I bought some superfine Arabic type, such as no native journal possessed, and added an Arabic staff. Very serious errors, however, used to creep in, I found, so that I was compelled, besides French, to take up the Arabic editorship, and read and correct every Arabic proof. The work of the "Britannia Press" was now so heavy that we had to buy another machine, a Marinoni this time, together with a couple of hand presses for cards, business notices, bill headings, and suchlike jobs. Big bills for theatres, sales, etc., for placarding, also began coming in, and gradually it became evident that we two could not physically endure the strain much longer. For the last three months of the year I hardly ever went to bed, merely lying down on a sofa in the office, and being waked up every half-hour or so with proofs. All day long the pen was in hand and the brain busy writing and translating, till human nature could stand it no more. We had fought the fight and won it beyond our expectation. The *Bosphore* was nearly ruined, and came to offer to sell us its press and paper—a proposal we had intense satisfaction in treating with the contempt it deserved. It was certainly very pleasant for me to be making about £300 a month, but it was impossible to go on, and taking outsiders in to do the work I was doing myself meant cutting down profits at once as well as deterioration.

On the 31st December, without telling anybody, I sat at my desk and wrote out, "*The 'Times of Egypt' will cease to appear from this date*," and told the compositors to set this forth in their best type, and to post it to all subscribers. The first impression produced was that I had gone mad, the second that I was bankrupt. On the 1st of January every soul who had a claim on the "Britannia Press" produced it, and I should be sorry to say how many hundreds I paid out that morning. When I mounted my horse that afternoon and went for a wild gallop, I felt like a man let out of prison. Hitherto I had only been able at sunrise to take a ride for an hour, and the rest of the day and night had been spent in the offices. Now, at

length, I was free again. It was true I had only been a slave to myself, but until we had made the *Times of Egypt* a solid success, patent as such to the world, it was a point of honour with Clere and myself not to give in. I think he must in his heart of hearts have been as pleased as I was to get rid of the task. Subsequent events proved how correct had been my estimates. I sold the paper and the press to Messrs. Rees & Roe, and they put in Clere as editor and manager. They were compelled, however, to employ a whole staff to do the duties we two had done, and from the day I left the office the business fell to pieces. The paper was removed to Alexandria,—in my eyes a great mistake,—and lingered on for about six months, when it died a natural death. Before this happened, I was asked if I would not resume the editorship at a big figure, but it can easily be understood that I declined. On its final cessation, Sir E. Baring also pressed me very strongly to revive it, offering, if I did not feel inclined to pay for it, to arrange matters himself, and guarantee me a fixed income, as he considered a paper such as it had been under my management was a desideratum as a mouthpiece for English views and interests, and to combat the French organs, which had then become extremely violent and insulting. For various reasons I regretted to be unable to accede to Sir Evelyn's wishes, and the matter dropped, leaving the *Times of Egypt* in its dishonoured Alexandrian grave.

Enough, and perhaps more than enough, has now been said about work in Cairo, so I may turn to lighter themes. As usual wherever an Englishman sets his foot, sports of all kinds began to be inaugurated. Into all these I entered with great zest, as may be imagined, for I always preferred play to labour. A racecourse and polo-ground, with tennis courts and a patron Sporting Club, were very soon started. As far as racing went, my share was very small, though I generally had three or four horses in training. I learnt most that I knew about horseflesh from Colonel Taylor and Principal Veterinary-Surgeon Beach, and though I was never much of a performer between the flags, I

acquired a thorough ordinary veterinary knowledge of animals, so much so that when contracting, as I did for some years, for the supply of animals, chiefly mules, to the Governmental departments, I was able to dispense with professional assistance in purchasing, which made a great difference in final profit.[1]

The tennis courts were out at Ghezireh, but very inconvenient in many ways, so I suggested building a cement court in town. This was ridiculed, as the paper had been; but after getting some land from M. Suarez, I set about the construction. The subscription was to be £3 a year, and limited to fifty, to cover the expenses; but within a very short time I had eighty applicants, who ultimately increased to one hundred and twenty, and as I did not wish to run it for personal profit, it was turned into a Club, of which I was for some while treasurer. The most regular attendant was Lord Cromer, who seldom missed an afternoon with the lawn tennis racket. Our best player was Mr. Wallich of the Railways at that time. Recently he came over to Constantinople and carried off the Levant Championship Cup, and he and I in those days played for the Civilians, being beaten in the final tie at Cairo by Lieutenants Cotton and Prinsep—both, alas! now dead—representing the Egyptian Army.[2]

Another amusement a good deal in fashion was fencing. All the teaching was in the hands of some Italian *maestri*, from whom I took my regular lessons, until I thought I had learnt all they could teach. One of the most fervent amateurs whom I then met was Sir E. Vincent, who, from his height, reach, and strength, was always formidable. When starting my paper, though, I hazily foresaw

[1] The first mule contract I took was at a price of about £24 a head, and after two years or three, the last one I fulfilled was at £12, still leaving me about £2 a head to the credit side. It may be guessed how much was made on the first ones.

[2] Last year the post of Inspector-General of Egyptian Telegraphs was vacant, and I hope I am betraying no secrets in saying that Lord Cromer gave it to Mr. Wallich, with the remark, "For the last ten years I have played tennis with Wallich every day of my life, and he has never asked me a favour, so he shall get this." A better appointment was never made.

possible, if not probable, duels, and through the manager of our Club applied to Prevost in Paris to send me out his most capable *maître d'armes*. For some considerable period I kept this gentleman at my own expense for my own benefit, but he was afterwards taken on by the Turf Club as Professor. From the start I had of others, I was always in the highest class, and the only man I really feared was Captain Maxwell, who was very quick, and as strong as a young bull, which I certainly was not. Besides fencing in the Club, Maxwell and I sometimes went out in the early morning to Ghezireh, and, stripping to our shirt sleeves, had some practice at the *Jeu du Terrain*. Passers-by used to think it was a real duel, and blood was very often drawn in these mimic combats, which are most useful and instructive, as the general effect is quite different in the open air to what it is when facing an opponent on the plank in a saloon. Besides fencing, now and again the gloves would be donned at the Club; but there was no match for Maxwell at this game, though "Gerry" Portal, as he was always called, used often to have a spar with him. Surgeon Power was another good boxer, but he had neither the youth nor strength of Maxwell.

I cannot refrain here from relating a scene which I shall never forget. The Italian fencing masters seeing their pupils deserting them for the Frenchman, decided to coalesce amongst themselves and open a grand new *Ecole d'Armes*, and advertised as an additional attraction a "Professor of Boxing from America." Our Club invited the Professor to come and give an exhibition of his prowess; but he declined, answering that he was bound by contract to the Italians. For the opening of the new establishment a general invitation was sent to any members of the Turf Club to be present. As we were riding back from polo, Maxwell suggested we might drop in, and we did so. We found about two hundred foreigners assembled, but we were the only two Englishmen present, though the manager of our own Club and the French *maître d'armes* were there. After watching a few bouts with the foils, we inquired if there was to be any boxing, and were told

that the Professor was in attendance, but nobody wanted to take him on: we were at liberty to do so if we liked. On expressing a curiosity to see him, we were introduced to a rather short, pudgy man, in a frock coat and silk hat, who stated that he was very much at our service. Maxwell thereupon said he would not mind having a spar to amuse the audience, and the champion withdrew to prepare himself. In ten minutes he appeared in a sleeveless jersey, feeling his biceps, which were truly enormous, and strolled round the ring "ruffling" it in the most approved fashion.

The gloves were brought, and Maxwell in his jack boots stepped out of his chair, peeled off his blazer, and was ready. After I had tied on his mittens, he held out his hand, apparently to the confusion of the Professor, who did not know what he meant, and Maxwell winked at this mark of ignorance of boxing etiquette. They had not been at it half a minute before a "postman" was administered, which so astonished and enraged the Italian that, flinging his arms like a windmill, he rushed Maxwell by sheer weight, and irrespective of the punishment he was receiving all the time, clean through two or three rows of sitting spectators, who collapsed with their chairs in a pie, through an open door, and into an adjoining room, where he fell on the top of him. With some difficulty I hauled him off, and the pair faced each other for round number two. In the beginning all the onlookers had tittered and exchanged remarks of commiseration for the small Englishman who was going to be massacred, but now their champion was fairly painted, and the gloves were more red than white. No time was cut to waste, and the big fellow commenced with a rush which it was impossible to stop. He must have scaled at least sixteen stone, if not more, to Maxwell's eleven-and-a-half at most. The Briton hit straight and hard as he was forced back, till he was pinned against the wall with his adversary's head in his chest. I feared biting, as I could see the Southern blood was fairly roused, and hastened to separate them, seizing the professional by the ears.

"How do you feel, old man?" I rather anxiously inquired.

"All right! He can't hit me in a week, and he's about done now. If he had caught me fair the first round, he might have hurt me, but all the steam is out of him now."

"You'd better finish this round," I concluded. "I don't like the look of things;" and as a matter of fact cries of "*Basta, basta!*" "*Vergogna!*" were being raised on all sides as the beaten man showed his gory face, now a mass of blood, whilst Maxwell's fists were soaking, and the floor red. He was gritty enough, however, to insist on going on, though very groggy.

The third round did not last a minute. One on the mark brought his head forward, and a cross on the side of the neck stretched him out. Two bystanders picked him up by the head and two by the heels, and carried the fallen gladiator away. Maxwell quietly put on his coat, and we bowed and thanked them all for a very pleasant afternoon. A most respectful silence marked our exit through a broad lane, hastily made, and we adjourned to our own Club to have a whisky and soda, which Maxwell, though he had never been touched, had well earned. I told this story to Bat Mullins, who had taught the hero of it, and his delight may be imagined. It transpired that the Professor was a circus Hercules or strong man; but he had no idea of boxing, and I doubt if he had ever had the gloves on in his life. It was a sad lesson for the poor fellow, who was laid up for a fortnight, and never offered to give lessons in the noble art again.

I might now dilate on pigeon-shooting, which I had a great share in promoting, and where we had such good shots as poor Chamley Turner and Brophy, both of whom, curiously enough, met their end by drowning in the Nile, though both, especially Turner, who was a champion at it, were strong swimmers. I will pass, however, to a subject which will doubtless appeal to a larger circle, namely, gambling.

As soon as the first Egyptian campaign was over, just as happened at Constantinople when the Russo-Turkish

War ended, Cairo swarmed with shady roulette and baccarat tables. The officers, non-co.'s, and even men, had accumulated pay, and most of it went to the keepers of these dens. I used sometimes to watch the play, and win a little money by staking on the opposite chance to that on which any particularly heavy coup was being played. I did this on the supposition that cheating was freely exercised, and my idea was proved up to the hilt one evening when the croupier cried, "*Apro!*" lifted the fateful lid, and behold! there was no wheel inside! The system there pursued was this. The box containing the wheel touched the wall, in which was a cupboard holding a confederate. There were pinholes through which he could see where the money lay, whether it was on red or black, odd or even, etc., and as soon as the ball stopped rolling, he deftly withdrew the whole concern and dropped the ivory into a convenient stall.

The scene which ensued beggars description. The lights were turned out, and a general scramble for the bank followed. Knives and chair legs were freely used, and everybody was very pleased to get out into the street. All these *tripôts* made small fortunes, but were gradually shut one after another by the police, and so-called private baccarat clubs took their place. These did even a more roaring trade than the roulette tables, and were usually conducted with tolerable fairness, the weight of money and experience always being sufficient to ensure winning. Some of them were comparatively select, and almost exclusively patronised by Britishers, and one or two favoured foreigners. So much money was lost, though, by our officers, that a general order forbade them to frequent these clubs, in spite of which, nevertheless, a few of the more reckless were generally to be found in those where they did not expect to be betrayed. There was one of these clubs especially favoured by our countrymen, and in consequence it incurred the jealousy and hatred of its rivals, who wished to have their share in the pluming of fat pigeons. Its proprietor, a Frenchman, was often warned against the

Greek ruffians who considered themselves wronged by the superior popularity of his place, and he hired an Albanian to keep guard below and to allow none but habitués to enter. One night I was playing there, when several pistol-shots rang out below, and directly afterwards the door-keeper staggered up and fell over the threshold. Rushing downstairs, we found another man dead at the foot of the steps, a second lying sorely wounded in the road, and a third slightly wounded in the clutch of the police. It appeared that these three had presented themselves and said they wanted to see the manager. The Albanian had refused to permit them to pass, when they made a simultaneous attack on him with knives and pistols. He received a bullet in the chest and a stab between the ribs, and died in a few minutes. The result of his fire was as above stated. I might give a good many instances within my personal knowledge of very similar outrages, but it would serve no good purpose. The result of them all was that baccarat began to be played at the Turf Club, as it was already in vogue at the Khedivial. I do not intend to mention any names in connection with the high play which used to go on, since my own case, as one of the moderate players, will amply suffice to illustrate it. On the following page is a faithful extract from my baccarat book for an ordinary month. There were other times at which I both won and lost more largely, but this may be taken as a fair sample.

Except a few, almost professionals, most of us played not from any great passion for the game, but for want of something better to do, and for good company. Baccarat is a game which is perhaps not so simple as many people imagine, but it requires no great mental strain, and when once a good party sat down we seldom separated till the small hours were growing into big ones. There were a certain number of very regular attendants, amongst whom I was one, who for four or five years missed very few nights, and yet I can affirm with absolute truth that I cared, and care, very little for play, unless it be a good game of whist, vint, or mild poker.

1885		WON	LOST
August	1st	£250	...
,,	2nd	...	£120
,,	3rd	...	...
,,	4th	...	110
,,	5th	...	...
,,	6th	10	...
,,	7th	100	...
,,	8th	...	100
,,	9th	70	...
,,	10th	40	...
,,	11th	160	...
,,	12th	90	...
,,	13th	75	...
,,	14th	...	...
,,	15th	...	...
,,	16th, 17th	...	...
,,	18th	...	85
,,	19th, 20th	30	...
,,	21st	20	...
,,	22nd	...	60
,,	23rd	62	...
,,	24th	60	...
,,	25th	...	55
,,	26th	50	...
,,	27th	...	30
,,	28th	30	...
,,	29th	...	19
,,	30th	30	...
,,	31st	45	...
		£1242	£569
		569	
		+ £673	

For some time, indeed almost as long as I stuck to punting, I was a fairly steady winner, but in the end I changed to banking, and was despoiled in a few months of all I had won and a "bit" more besides. One of the reasons of this was that most of the old amateur players had by that time given it up, and I had only the professionals against me.

When I had no more cash to lose, I also threw up the sponge, and have very seldom played since; but if I parted with my money, I learnt a secret which I am now going to divulge for the first time. Probably most old

gamblers will smile pityingly when I say that in the next few pages I shall set forth a method by which anybody with ordinary patience can be as sure of winning as anything in this world is sure. It was given to me by one of those who had won most of my money, and on the few occasions on which I have tried it, it has always succeeded. I consider myself rather an old hand, and personally I am completely convinced of the invincibility of this system, which is one I have never seen in print yet, although part of it will be familiar to every lover of the green cloth.

Without further preamble, therefore, here is the goose with golden eggs.

I start on the well-known theory, or fact, that all equal chances equalise themselves in the long-run, whether it be the hand of the baccarat banker against that of the punter, the red against the black, the odd against the even, or the head against the tail.

The object of the perfect punter should be to profit by as many of the appearances of his chance as he can, and to lose as few as possible coups on the adverse one. In the course of, say, any 1000 coups, it is an established fact beyond dispute that there will be about an equality between any two equal chances. Supposing we take red and black, for convenience sake. We are backing black. Out of the 500 reds which are against us there are sure to be a number of "series" of three, four, or more. I think nobody will object to admitting this. Let us say that half of the total, namely, 250, is made up of 50 "series" of four or more. *If we play only two losing coups and then cease staking until our colour turns up, when we begin again,* we can only lose 100 out of the 250 against us. *Vice versâ,* out of 250 blacks turning up in the same manner, we shall have always omitted to stake on the first one coming after a red, consequently we shall miss 50 winning blacks, but we shall score on 200.

The basis of the system, then, is never to stake more than twice losing, and thereby you avoid the long runs against you, which break so many wretched punters, who

drop in a couple of long losing "series," which they persist in betting against, all that they may have won in twenty smaller winning ones. It then remains to arrange a method of staking whereby you may recoup faster than you pay away, though even with a fixed stake you would almost invariably win, as above shown. The most convenient one is the familiar 1, 2, 3.

These figures must be set down, one over the other, thus—

1
2
3

The stake will always be the sum of the top and bottom ones. The first *mise* will therefore be $1+3=4$. If you win, you strike out the two figures which have formed your stake, thus—

~~1~~
2
~~3~~

Only 2 then remains, and you stake it. If you lose, you write it down underneath, thus—

~~1~~
2
~~3~~
2

Your next stake will be $2+2=4$. If you win, you strike them both out, and your column being dead, you begin afresh, with a gain of 6 on an intermittence of three coups. Supposing, however, that you lose again. Your figures then will be—

~~1~~
2
~~3~~
2
4

and you leave off staking, having lost two consecutive turns. We will say your black next turns up when you have nothing on. As soon as it does, you recommence staking. For argument's sake, we will imagine that after your two losing coups red turned up three times, during which you looked on with indifference. Then your black

also has a run of five. What happens? You have not staked on the first one, but after the second one has won this will be the state of your calculation—

~~1~~
~~2~~
3
2
~~4~~

The third turn-up takes out the last 2, and the fourth and fifth polish off a fresh column, leaving you 12 stakes to the good on equal runs. Every time your figures are all crossed out you will find you have won six stakes, to whatever length it may be drawn out. It will be seen at a glance that by this calculation you put down one figure each time and strike out two; in other words, every winning coup is equivalent to what you have lost, plus either one of the original three numbers, or if, in the course of play, as may happen, they have all been crossed out, before the column is destroyed, plus another losing coup. It requires no mathematical genius to see that there is one, and only one, possible combination which can defeat this system. That is, that one black should continuously turn up by itself between two or more reds. You would never be "on" it when it appeared, and would always lose on the two blacks. This eventuality, however, is scarcely worth taking into account. An examination of the records of Monte Carlo will, I think, fail to discover any instance of solitary blacks or reds sandwiched between two and more of the opposite colour more than eight times, and that perhaps once or twice in a year.

The following run is about as unfavourable as can be imagined, and will necessitate recourse to a modification of the system in order to prevent too high stakes:—

1 ×
2 ×
3 (0)
4 ×
5 ×
6 (0)
7 0

8 o
9 ×
10 ×
11 (o)
12 o
13 ×
14 ×
15 (o)
16 o
17 ×
18 ×
19 (o)
20 o
21 ×
22 o
23 ×

In this there are 12 reds (×) and 11 blacks (o), but we have only staked and won on six of the blacks, lost on all twelve reds. At the twenty-third coup we have to write down 29, and our column stands thus—

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
11
12
16
17
22
25
29

We now have too high a figure at the top. It will take us longer to end the column, perhaps, but it is safer to split the twelve into, say, 1, 1, 2, 2, 2, 4, and reconstitute our column thus—

1
1
2
2
2
4
17
29

Patience will be necessary, but for those with small capital it is always advisable to reduce the top figure as soon as it reaches 10. In the foregoing example, the backer of black would at the twenty-fourth coup be losing the sum of all the figures left in the column, less 6, since, when they are all obliterated, he will be plus 6, but two blacks would take him out, or three or four intermittences. In many cases it would pay very well for two players to each back one chance, though in a succession of small series like the foregoing it would not. As above, the backer of red would lose altogether about 32, and the backer of black 48 or 50; but it must be repeated that it is purposely given as a singularly hard run.

In a run like the following, for example, both would win—

1	×	Red.
2	o	Black.
3	×	
4	o	
5	×	
6	o	
7	o	
8	o	
9	o	
10	×	
11	×	
12	×	
13	×	
14	o	
15	o	
16	×	
17	×	
18	×	
19	×	
20	×	

Here the backer of black wins 12, minus 2, left out of the 8, which the sum of his column amounts to, namely, 10 nett. Black wins 24. Between them on twenty coups they win 34 without either ever having had to stake more than 7. If one plays in unities of 5 francs, a sum of even £50 should suffice to see the end of almost any small batches of series. My own experience is that a column is

usually struck out on an average about four times in an hour; or at 5 franc unities, a gain of nearly £5 may with tolerable confidence be expected at roulette, and almost with certainty at baccarat, where, from some unexplainable reason, this system works quicker, although I believe it to be quite invincible even at the former game, since it has the advantage of never approaching the maximum and of enabling one to treat the zeros with indifference as mere adverse chances. At anyrate, such as it is, I make a present of my system to the public, and hope that any who may care to give it a trial will find it answer as well as I have invariably done whenever I have put it into practice.

CHAPTER VII

ON the 1st of January 1889 I said good-bye to Egypt, and started for Roumania *viâ* Constantinople, which I reached on the 11th, having spent a week at Athens *en route*. Next day I had lunch with Sir W. White at the Embassy, and at two in the afternoon embarked for Varna, where we landed on the 13th in a tremendous snowstorm. This was rather an abrupt change of climate, as the day before I left Cairo we had picnicked at the Pyramids in our shirt sleeves at midnight. There were no trains running, and we had to put up in some discomfort at the hotel. Next morning, instead of going at 8.30, the mail could not leave till 11, and then we had to walk from the hotel to the station over a road like glass, so slippery that no carriages could run. Bucharest was naturally all under snow, and I had my first sledge-ride into the town on arrival. Altogether, I stayed less than two months in my new post—the "little Paris of the East," as it is often called. Most of the days were spent in skating, sledging, and paying calls, and the evenings at public and private balls, for it was carnival-time. Bucharest is one of the few places left where a carnival masked ball is often patronised by respectable people, and where some fun is to be had out of it, in contradistinction to the rowdy and vulgar mob of shop-boys and theatre-girls which represents the company at most of these melancholy travesties of frolic elsewhere.

Believing that I was likely to stay for at least a year or two, I arranged with Mr. Boxshall, the American, and Mr. Brown, the British, Vice-Consul to go shares in a little house, and we spent a good deal of money in furnishing it. The abode of the three B.'s soon acquired a great reputation, and many were the merry days and

nights it saw. Sir Frank Lascelles was then Minister, and his two sons being out there for the winter, they, together with half a dozen other of the younger members of the Diplomatic body, were daily visitors. Another moving spirit was Reuter's representative, a somewhat mad Irishman named Mooney, and though Bucharest is not much in need of the colour, we used sometimes to paint it very red. All this was put an end to in my case very suddenly by my being utilised one day to take the bags, as Queen's Messenger, to Sir A. Nicolson at Pesth. On reaching the station, a telegram was handed to me, kindly forwarded by Sir F. Lascelles, which had come just after I had started. It was laconic, containing only three words: "Go to Belgrade.—Mudford." Supposing that there were reasons for this which it was not expedient to give, I asked Sir A. Nicolson, my old Chief when I was a Student Interpreter at Ortakeui, if he could arrange for the return bags, and off I went to Belgrade, with a small handbag for all luggage, and a few pounds in my pocket.

In the Servian capital everything was in a state of the wildest excitement, for Milan had just abdicated, and I had my work cut out for me. Owing to the censorship, all correspondents had to send, or more safely to take, their messages across the Save to Semlin. There was a comfortable hotel there, and generally a little theatre-going, far superior to the wretched entertainments to be had in Belgrade, and once over there we, as often as not, spent the night on Austrian soil. Before entering into any more personal reminiscences, I may perhaps be allowed to introduce the reader to Belgrade and the Serbs.[1]

Belgrade, or Beograd, the White Fortress, stands on one of the most magnificent natural sites man could choose or conceive. From its lofty cliff it looks down on the waters of the Save, rolling in from the West, and the scarcely wider Danube curving Eastward towards the forests of Basias, whilst behind it the fertile plains of Hungary stretch away into a misty distance, and end by

[1] Most of this description appeared in almost, when not exactly, the same words in the pages of the *Saturday Review*.

mingling indistinctly with the northern horizon. Like most Turkish fortresses, Belgrade is built upon a hill, sloping towards the two rivers, and on either slope the houses creep from the edges of the stream, straggling up to the summit crowned with the old castle and the new gardens of Kalimeidan, planted along the moat and upper bastions of the citadel, which is now a mere relic of the past, and in no condition to defend the peaceful dwellers beneath its massive shade. Like a toothless old watch-dog, it still keeps mimic ward ; but it has nothing warlike except its appearance. Where now, on a sunny afternoon, the populace lies lazily basking on the ground, or strolling with its children, sweethearts, and wives, enjoying the glorious panorama of nature a couple of thousand feet below and twenty miles round in every direction, it is difficult to picture to oneself the Turkish atrocities, the shouts of the murderers, the shrieks of the murdered, and the impalement of gory and headless trunks, as having had for their stage and theatre these very grassy plots and gravel walks. Yet it was in Kalimeidan Gardens that some of the most fearful horrors of modern war were perpetrated, resulting finally in the intervention of Europe and the hurling back of the Ottoman tyranny beyond the Balkans.[1]

Since its emancipation, Servia has changed considerably, and Belgrade as the capital has made the largest strides towards claiming its place amongst the civilised centres of Europe. All the ancient Turkish Quarter has been swept away, and is now chiefly occupied by a colony of Spanish Jews. A few half-ruined fountains with Arabic inscriptions, and one single mosque, fast falling to pieces in uncared-for decay, are all that remain of the Moslem

[1] Very few witnesses remained of these barbarities. Amongst them was an Italian named Carlo Perolo, who had been an eye-witness of all the events which culminated in the bombardment of Belgrade in 1862. When the Commission of Inquiry arrived, the Turkish Delegate offered Perolo £10,000 and a passport for any European capital, if he would simply leave Belgrade that afternoon, at the same time saying that his life would be in danger if he stayed. Perolo, however, refused to move, and gave in his testimony. He never received even thanks from Prince Michael.

sway. In close proximity to this last relic of the religion of the late masters of the city stands the National Theatre, built in the Modern Italian style, and over against it a model of Prince Michael on horseback. The Royal Palace is also a handsome block, though lacking in dignity. Lately an electric tramway has been run from the station up Michael Street, but having gone so far we have nearly reached the limit of all that can be said for the beauty and luxury of Belgrade. Beyond what nature has done for it, and what King Milan did for himself, there is not much to attract. The private houses are comfortable, but no endeavour seems to be made after anything beyond mere creature wants, even by the most wealthy. Public amusement is even more meagre than such is provided for each other by the few most recklessly gay spirits in private life. Social entertainment of any kind is generally regarded as superfluous, and except an occasional dinner-party or two, nothing of the kind is attempted outside Court circles. When the theatre is open, it affords a certain resource for those who can appreciate Servian drama, but otherwise the acme of enjoyment within reach consists, or consisted in my day, in listening to a German band playing in an atmosphere of the foulest description, reeking with the fumes of tobacco, beer, and unwashed Servians, and in absorbing successive glasses of deleterious liquors. Long practice makes perfect in both these accomplishments, but a stranger will find it hard to breathe for more than ten minutes in a Belgrade café. *Per contra*, a famous member of the police force is pointed out with pride who spends his whole evenings in these establishments, presumably in the exercise of his functions, and who lately imbibed seventy-eight *bocks* of beer between eight o'clock and midnight.

But if the town is not attractive, the surrounding country is perfection, either for riding, driving, or walking. Long avenues of poplar, beech, acacia, and elm lead out north, south, east, and west, the big roads narrowing and broadening, as the houses are left behind, into country lanes between woods, fields, and hedgerows, which remind

one involuntarily of an English landscape. Down by the Danube and the Save broad marshes, covered with sodden grass and rushes and fringed with osier, tempt the sportsman in search of snipe and duck, whilst the birch coppices strewed with autumn leaves, through which, here and there, trickle snow-born streams, look a destined home for the woodcock.

In analysing the national character you have two distinct classes to deal with—the governmental and commercial, which wears coats, trousers, and boots—but not always socks; and the peasant, which affects jackets, petticoats, and sandals. The judgment of the world, based on the observations of travellers and foreign residents, must naturally be formed rather from the first class, with which they come into contact, than from the second, which they only know vaguely from statistics and by sight. Many of the more pugnacious Serbs when cornered in argument by irrefragable proof of the corruption and backwardness of their Government, will declare that it is not fair to judge the people by the townsfolk and the bureaucracy. Unfortunately, these are the specimens given to the critic for dissection, and if a nation is not to be judged by its institutions and its leading men, or by its civil and social progress in its capital and principal towns, but merely by visionary ideas of its own capabilities and merits as expressed by those who signally fail to prove their theories in themselves, all discussion becomes impossible.

As regards the peasants, there is very little difference between them and their like all over the East. The agriculturist is generally (not always in Servia) sober, honest, hard-working, and hospitable, whether he be born a Turk, an Arab, a Roumanian, a Bulgarian, or a Serb. Men and women alike wear huge sandals with a wilderness of straps bound about the leg up to the knee, and the ladies display multicoloured aprons worked by themselves, brief skirts, and short, thick-quilted jackets, with a gaudy kerchief binding the hair. The aforesaid aprons are among the few pretty objects a traveller can take away with him as

examples of native industry. They are in a sort of bastard Turkish style, and though rough in material and crude in colour, are effective as chair, or small table, covers. The best product of the country is the Pirot carpet, worth about ten shillings a square metre. The designs are extremely pretty, and the rugs, without being so heavy as the Persian, or so ragged and scant in the web and woof as Caramanian, wear for ever. The manufacture of these is almost entirely confined to Pirot, near the Bulgarian frontier, from which place they take their commercial name. The real industrial wealth of Servia lies in its pigs. Out of a population of about ten millions, seven millions walk on four legs, with an independent air, a sort of "pig and a brother" assumption of co-equal rights and privileges. The Servian pig is certainly a remarkable animal, and no other worldly pig is so self-assertive, so strong, and so hairy as he. I have seen one of them, whilst driving along, seated by the side of his master, insist on alighting where he pleased, which happened to be over the splash-board. No persuasion or argument could induce him to alter his mind, and it was not until he had tripped up the pony and upset the cart that he gave his grunt of satisfaction.[1] The mature hog's coat is of a deep red brown and as curly as a retriever's, turning to long grey bristles down his back as he advances in years. His presence is everywhere visible or audible. He crops out on every hillside and from every thicket and copse, and lines the banks of the Danube in his hundreds, whilst the train that carries you away from Belgrade will cross trucks laden with squealing porkers which tax the imagination to conceive by what ingenuity the brutes were

[1] Talking of peasants, ponies, and carts, I was once driving behind a jibbing beast, who finally in a narrow lane firmly declined to budge. The driver, after exhausting every other method and breaking a stout whip-handle over its ribs, got down, unharnessed the traces, extracting at the same time the slugs from a young blunderbuss he carried. He then delicately elevated the tail of the recalcitrant animal, and training his pistol carefully, pulled the trigger. We had some difficulty afterwards in catching the pony, but there was no more jibbing; indeed, he would hardly let himself be taken out of the shafts at the end of the day.

ever induced to enter and be penned. When we remember that the present King Alexander's father was a swineherd at Takovo, we must further allow the pig his niche in Servian history to add to his commercial importance and artistic value.

Perhaps one of the reasons of Servia's unhappiness is that she has too great a past to live up to, and too little a present to give her a chance of doing so. Her history is her curse. Instead of grappling with the hard, earnest problems of to-day, she lives in an atmosphere of dreams, wherein, without efforts of her own, the old glories of Czar Dushan's kingdom are to be revived. The Serb believes, beyond all power of contrary conviction, that because Servia was once a formidable empire and possessed legendary heroes of the Homeric type, she has a perfect claim on the sympathies of all Europe in her natural wish to regain her ancient prestige at the expense of other nations who are steadily and doggedly working out their own salvation. Sitting in his pothouse, and trolling forth lugubrious ditties of the great deeds of Marko Kralievitch and Milosh, the Serb waits for destiny's last word. He has not yet realised that the nineteenth century is not the sixteenth, and the twentieth will resemble it still less. With the fatal birthright, like the Greek, of an epic story, the Serb also inherits a splendid confidence in his own personal perfections. His vanity would be comic if it were not deplorable. His imperviousness to all kindly criticism is childish, and it is this trait which most utterly destroys all prospects for his improvement. It is not the blindness of the man who will not see, for he positively does not, and cannot, perceive his own shortcomings. More than this, he rejoices over them with a joy which would be interesting in a schoolboy or a savage, but which is to the last degree saddening in a man with professed aspirations. The character of a nation is best shadowed forth in its recreations and habits of daily life. When not in actual pursuit of his work or duties, the life of the Serb is not passed at home or in outdoor amusements, but in his favourite tavern or café. If you enter one of these estab-

lishments and call for refreshment, you will find yourself at a table covered with a cloth once white, but not destined to recover that hue until all traces of the original colour have disappeared. A remonstrance would cause the most intense surprise ; for at the next table, spread in an equally repugnant manner, a couple of Ministers are quite contentedly devouring their meal, and playfully practising the sword-swallowing trick with their knives and green peas. What is good enough for a Servian Minister should be good enough for a ridiculous foreigner. A little farther off, a fifteenth-class German singing-girl is drinking beer with an officer in uniform, preparatory to mounting the platform, and close beside them are half a dozen private soldiers. This is the discipline of the Servian Army. If you were to remark that, not only in England, but in a foreign country and on campaign,—in Egypt, for example, —all privates and non-commissioned officers would salute and retire on the entry of a junior subaltern wearing his sword, the Serb would fail to see any reason for such decency and respect. In fact, he rather prefers a dirty tablecloth and the proximity of his inferiors in various stages of moral and physical uncleanliness.

Notwithstanding their backwardness, the Servians live on in a bliss of supreme contempt for everything which is outside and beyond them. Instead of the unknown being a theme for admiration or ambition, it is rather one for scorn. They are perfectly satisfied with their rotten roads, their badly-lighted and malodorous streets, their defective police and municipal regulations, their tumble-down, dreary, carpetless Ministries, their censor-ridden press, and their generally slovenly conditions of existence. The officials will tell you that they have no pavements, no gas, and no water, because they have no money. The reason that they have no money is that they have no credit, and the reason they have no credit is that they show no ministerial or constitutional stability or honesty. Starting on the assumption that all foreigners come to Servia to plunder and steal, the Serb puts every obstacle in their way. When ordinary means fail, he robs them himself as soon as their enter-

prise shows signs of being lucrative. Having very nearly succeeded at length, by repeated acts of chicanery and violence, in stopping all influx of foreign capital, the Serbs are beginning to stew in their own juice, and yet they complain that they can obtain no sympathy from Europe. Offering no inducements to strangers, treating those from whom they might learn with stupid contumely, and pluming themselves meanwhile on their self-reliance, the Serbs, like the Scriptural swine, are rushing headlong down a steep place into the sea of moral and civil corruption. If a foreigner points out an abuse to a Minister, he is sure to be met with the rejoinder, "You appear to think, sir, that because you are a Frenchman, or an Englishman, you are to be treated differently from the rest of the world." He does not perceive that the abuse is an abuse *per se*, and that any Serb might, and ought, to protest against it just as vigorously and pertinently. But the fact is that the Serb is content to endure what is intolerable to fully civilised beings. It is significant that whereas in other countries it is usually sufficient to bring offences to the notice of the Minister, in Servia you may spare yourself the trouble of doing so, and the annoyance of discovering that the highest officials are no more advanced in their views, or broader in their ideas, than the humblest and most ignorant of their subordinates.

It is true that there are bright exceptions to prove the rule, and with diligent search one might possibly find ten righteous men to save the country. But they are distinctly exceptions. The majority, especially those who are loudest in proclaiming their patriotism, will not stir a finger in any direction not dictated by self-interest, as wrongly understood by them according to their own dim, flickering lights. Hedged round with an impenetrable barrier of self-satisfaction, they will neither listen nor learn; and if ever there was a pride which promised a fall, it is the latter-day pride of the Serbs.

The hotels being far from comfortable, I soon took up quarters at the only respectable pension at Belgrade, kept by a M. Baimel, and patronised by several of the young

bachelor diplomats, in the Balkanskaya Ulitza, one of the principal streets of the town. Amongst my fellow-lodgers was M. de Buisseret, the Belgian Secretary, and one night we were returning from a whist party on foot. As we were half-way home, we heard some shouting behind us, and a man came rushing headlong down the hill. In another instant two or three shots rang out, and several bullets whistled past our ears and struck the wall and paving-stones. We had too good a knowledge of the Serbs to do anything but take to our heels and seek refuge as fast as we could in our own house. My room looked out on the street, and, opening the shutters, we watched subsequent proceedings, which were curious. The pursuing party halted opposite, and after satisfying themselves that the fugitive was not with us, concluded he must have hidden himself in the dwelling over against ours. There was a big door, and after hammering at it, an old lady appeared at the window with a candle. One of the police then very carefully opened the gate and thrust in his rifle, whilst another with equal caution held the light. A report was followed by a groan, and in a few seconds a corpse was dragged out and thrown into the middle of the road, with an accompaniment of abusive epithets. There it was left until next morning, when the newspapers contained glowing accounts of the efficiency and desperate valour of the guardians of the peace, who had chased a notorious brigand, armed with a pistol and hatchet, and had only succeeded in shooting him down after a terrific struggle in which two of them had been wounded. On investigation, it was proved that the murdered man—for a more cold-blooded murder was never perpetrated—was a harmless Austrian pedlar, who had crept into the yard and huddled up in a corner to sleep. Both M. de Buisseret and myself remonstrated with the authorities, and gave our version as eye-witnesses to the whole Diplomatic Corps, who nevertheless failed to obtain the slightest satisfaction, or even an admission of the truth.

Yet another instance of Servian savagery. I was

on a visit to our Vice-Consul at Nisch, Mr. Macdonald, who had just married and brought out his wife. One morning we sallied forth in a victoria to look for quail, and drove out about twelve miles. Just before lunch-time Macdonald had the misfortune to hit an old peasant woman with one or two shot in the wrist as she was squatting down out of sight amongst the corn. A great outcry was made, though she was hardly hurt at all, and Mrs. Macdonald herself bathed and bound up the wound temporarily, with a promise to bear the cost of medical treatment. About two hours later we were astonished to find ourselves surrounded by an angry crowd, who declared that they would not let us go. Macdonald declared that he had no wish to run away, that he was the British Vice-Consul, and that he demanded to talk with the Kmet or Mayor. "Oh yes!" was the reply, "you shall talk with him; he is coming directly;" and in fact he soon arrived, followed by a *posse*, one of whom carried several pieces of rope. In a twinkling they seized Macdonald, took away his gun and tied his arms behind him, striking him repeatedly meanwhile. It was with some difficulty that I restrained myself from firing upon them; but Macdonald himself entreated me to keep quiet, especially as they had worked themselves up to a foaming state of rage, and at least a score of them had rifles. The feelings of poor Mrs. Macdonald at this her first experience of the people amongst whom she had come to live may be imagined. The angry crowd had assembled round our midday camp, where the horses were grazing away from the carriage. After a whispered consultation, Macdonald entreated me to make a rush for Nisch and try and get help. I was very loth to leave him and his wife in the clutches of the mob, and at first absolutely refused to do so. He was so strong on the point, though, that I decided to make the attempt, and telling Mrs. Macdonald that if I got safe through I would be back before long, I made towards the best-looking of the two sorry jades which had brought us out. The peasants had from the first paid very little attention to

me, concentrating all their wrath upon the offender, and I managed to unhobble the horse unnoticed. In another instant I had vaulted on his back, and giving him some sounding kicks in the ribs, started off. Before I had gone twenty yards, I heard a yell of rage, and half a dozen of the natives were after me. I had neither saddle, bridle, nor whip; but I nevertheless went faster than they, and soon put a quarter of a mile between us. I had never been in this part of the country before, and only a very short while in Servia, not knowing ten words then of the language. Guessing they would try and cut me off if I rode in the straight direction for where I supposed the town lay, I took an exactly opposite line for nearly an hour. The result proved I was right, for they drew up a long cordon between the spot where they were and Nisch, which I only evaded by luck and by unconsciously taking a very wide détour. Anybody who has ever ridden a miserable razor-backed nag without appurtenances can form an idea of the delightful experience I went through. To cut a long story short, I reached Nisch about seven o'clock, and went straight to the Governor. He was, of course, out. I then repaired to the Prefect. Also out. Knowing the love of the Serb for the café, I inquired which was his favourite resort, and there, of course, I found him at last, and not without a good deal of argument I persuaded him to come out with a few mounted police, and we started to the rescue. At the village we heard that the whole party had gone up "into the mountain." In fact, they intended to hold the prisoners to ransom in true and orthodox brigand style. Pressing on, we had to ford two rivers, across which Mrs. Macdonald had been carried, but through which our unfortunate representative had had to wade, and finally we caught them up and released them. It is unnecessary to recount subsequent proceedings, beyond saying that the only satisfaction for this outrage was an apology, and I believe the imposition nominally of a small fine, which was never exacted. It will now be understood that in giving a general character for

hospitality and good behaviour to Balkan peasants a few pages back I made a reservation in the case of the Serb.

It was in Servia that I underwent the novel experience of being officially expelled. The facts merit historical honours. It was on the occasion of Queen Natalie's first visit to Belgrade since the divorce. The Government looked on her advent with great misgivings, and declared she should on no account be allowed access to her son, guarding the Palace with a battalion of infantry. The young King, who was only a boy and dearly loved his mother, resented these measures very deeply; and when the Queen went up the street he attempted to leave his room, but Dr. Dokitch his tutor simply locked the door, behind which a very stormy scene took place. Reporting proceedings, I telegraphed to the *Standard*: "I have good reason to know that King Alexander was only restrained from meeting his mother by main force. The Regents and his tutor had literally to forbid him to leave the Palace, and I am informed that the scene behind the locked doors of the Konak at the time of Queen Natalie's triumphal progress was of a most scandalous nature." This telegram appeared on the 1st October, and no notice whatever was taken of it at the time, nor any observations made to me. About a fortnight later, though, at four one afternoon, several police called at my rooms and exhibited an order for me to leave Servian territory before sunset. I protested most energetically, and declared that I would not go until I had referred to my Minister; but they would hear of no delay, and said that I had better pack anything I needed, for that at sunset they would put me on board a steamer. I sent a message round to Mr. St. John, but it did not reach him; and so, with the scantiest ceremony, I was escorted down to the river and to the other side in charge of a police officer. Next day I was unofficially informed that I might return if I liked, but that a German correspondent who had been exiled together with me would not be again allowed in Servia. It then turned out that the Government had reasons for wishing to get rid of

this other gentleman, but in order to cover the real object of the measure they had pretexted telegrams disagreeable and offensive to the King, and coupled me with the real man they wanted to send out of the country. This did not, however, suit me at all. The expulsion had been carried out illegally and brutally, without notice to my Minister and based on false pretences, whilst being radically a contravention of the article in the Constitution declaring that the "Press is free." I therefore addressed a very strong letter to M. Sava Gruitch, the President of the Council, pointing out that the whole business was an intrigue of the official in charge of the Press Bureau, whose irregular conduct in himself acting as correspondent for several foreign newspapers I had exposed, and who had taken this means of revenging himself. I also stated unofficially that it was not sufficient privately to give me notice of permission to return, but that as I had been publicly expelled I insisted on being publicly brought back with an apology. The case was also taken up in the Skuptschina, and was made the grounds of an attack on the Government; and finally, after a good deal of undignified wrangling, one of the superior officers of police was sent over to Semlin with a steam launch to tender an apology and to beg me to return under his escort, thus closing the incident.

Up to now it may be noticed that I have very little that is pleasant to say about Servia and the Serbs; but though perhaps it is one of the countries I have lived in which holds the fewest agreeable memories, I passed a very interesting year there, and met many remarkable men and women. Curiously enough, one of my best friends amongst the foreign diplomats was M. Persiany, the Russian Minister. I hope his colleagues will forgive me for saying that at the time of my residence he entirely held the keys of the situation, and did very much as he pleased. He has since been shelved, but he certainly held high the name and prestige of Russia whilst at Belgrade. Whenever I wished for information I could not easily obtain elsewhere I knew it could be found at M. Persiany's

—if he chose to give it. He was also full of original ideas, and a regular type of the Muscovite Minister. My entrance was always greeted with, "Here comes my enemy. Sit down and have a glass of sherry," and then the talk began. In my humble opinion it was M. Persiany who steered the Servian ship through the storms which succeeded each other so rapidly and threateningly after King Milan's abdication, and it was only after his removal that Russian influence began to fall back before Austrian. I regret that I am unable to reproduce many of the anecdotes and secrets told me by one and another at Belgrade, but a respect for confidences is the stock-in-trade of a newspaper correspondent, and if he betrays it he will soon find his occupation gone. I think, however, I may be allowed to take the following from my notes of a conversation with King Milan, who, with all the faults that the world casts in his teeth, is a monarch of great capabilities and strength of character. He is certainly to-day the only man whom all parties in Servia fear, as they treat most of those who happen to be in authority over them at one period or another with familiar contempt.

The conversation in question took place in July 1889, when His Majesty had returned to his old capital as father of the King. He was living in the Palace, and the talk turned upon Russia and Bulgaria. He then gave me the following amusing and instructive story:—"To illustrate Russian methods. In 1875 there was great excitement here about the Bosnian insurrection, and when I arrived by steamer I was met at the wharf by such a crowd and with such enthusiasm as I have never since seen—one and all shouting themselves hoarse for 'War!' The Ministry had not decided to make its declaration, but seemed inclined that way, and were arming volunteers everywhere, especially on the Montenegrin frontier. I saw that any day these bands, ostensibly organised for defence, might suddenly cross the boundary and drag us head and shoulders into a disastrous war. So I determined to take vigorous measures. The Skuptschina was then

sitting in the High School. I drove down with an aide-de-camp, and when I arrived the Ministers all came out to ask me what I wanted. I replied that in consonance with ancient usage in Servia, I, as Prince, wished to speak directly and personally with the representatives of the nation. They replied that such a course was quite unconstitutional, and that if I had anything to say it must be through them. I retorted that the moment was so critical that I had resolved to act, and that whether it was constitutional or not I would not be prevented. Whereupon they declared that if I entered the building they would at once resign *en masse*. Upon this I despatched my aide-de-camp to the Prefecture, and as soon as the Prefect arrived, I scrawled on a piece of paper, 'The Ministry has offered its resignation, which I have accepted. Henceforward you will pay no attention to any orders you may receive from those who held portfolios. You will come to the Palace daily and receive your instructions straight from me, and the current business will be carried on by the senior clerks. In case the Ministers attempt to exercise their functions you will at once arrest them all'—and gave it to him. I then turned to my Ministers and informed them they were such no longer, and went into the Chamber. There I made a speech, saying that all the *criailleries* and bombast which was pervading Servia was in the highest degree discreditable: that if they meant war they must at once vote supplementary army estimates, extraordinary taxes, etc., but that they must decide then and there, in my presence. I would put the question, 'Did Servia want war or not?' and each deputy was simply to say 'Yes' or 'No'—nothing more. There were about eighty present, and sixty were against and twenty for war. On the result being announced, I thanked them, and added that my own personal opinion was the same as that which they had just expressed. This being the case, all volunteer bands must forthwith be disarmed, and there must be no more blatant vapouring about war. The Ministry had resigned, and so on, and so on.

"That evening I drove out as usual to Topshidereh, and on the road I saw the Russian Minister, M. Kaltzoff, gesticulating to me to stop. I asked him what was the matter, and he replied, 'I have a communication to make to you. Perhaps you may be able to understand it; I can't,' and he handed me a despatch, which I still preserve as a curiosity and will show you some day. On one side was written—

"'Vous êtes chargé par le Gouvernement Impérial de remercier le Prince Milan pour l'acte d'energie qu'il vient de faire. Par son attitude vigoureuse et sa promptitude d'action il a épargné des grands malheurs à son pays. Un tel patriotisme en face d'un danger imminent mérite l'approbation de toute l'Europe, et le Gouvernement Impérial espère qu'il fera toujours preuve d'une sagesse et courage pareils à ceux qu'il a deployès à cette occasion. (Signé) NELIDOFF.'

And on the other side—

"'Pour l'amour de Dieu empêchez Milan de faire des folies. Ne sent-il donc pas qu'il risque son trône et l'avenir de son pays par des coups de tête comme celui qu'il vient de faire? Avertissez-lui très-sérieusement des conséquences graves que peut entraîner sa conduite.
'(Signé) GORTSCHAKOFF.'"[1]

[1] TRANSLATION.

"You are instructed by the Imperial Government to thank Prince Milan for his recent energetic action. By the vigour and promptitude he displayed he saved his country from great disasters. Such patriotism as his in the face of an imminent danger merits the approbation of all Europe, and the Imperial Government trusts that he will always exhibit the same wisdom and courage as he showed on this occasion.
"(Signed) NELIDOFF."
(*Ambassador at Constantinople.*)

"For God's sake stop Milan from playing the fool! Does he not see that he is risking his throne and the future of Servia by inconsiderate outbursts like his last one? Warn him very seriously of all the grave consequences his conduct may bring in its train.
"(Signed) GORTSCHAKOFF."
(*Russian Chancellor.*)

The first time I saw King Milan was about a week after his abdication when I was travelling to Pesth, and found that chance had given me the ex-King as a companion in the sleeping car. I prophesied then that he would not be very long away, and as a matter of fact in three months he was back at the Palace. Though married to a Russian wife, — Queen Natalie was a Mademoiselle Ketchko,—King Milan very soon developed Russophobe tendencies. In these he was supported by his Napredniak or Progressist Minister, M. Garashanin, who was so desperate at Russian intrigues that he declared war against Bulgaria as a forlorn hope of saving Servia from being absolutely hemmed in.[1] The effect of this war was to decide King Milan to abdicate in favour of his son, with a Council of Ministers presided over by the Queen as Regent. M. Garashanin, however, opposed such an arrangement tooth and nail, and nothing was done for a while. Meantime the marital differences between King Milan and his Consort grew into a scandal, which was terminated by a divorce of doubtful legality, refused by the Metropolitan Michael and pronounced by Bishop Theodosius. Things went from bad to worse, and at length the King agreed to make the best of a very bad job, and give to Servia the democratic constitution it was howling for. When once he had made up his mind to this sacrifice he entered into the task with his usual energy, and brought to bear upon it all his unquestionable gifts. The outcome was a liberal Constitution amounting almost to self-government, and far exceeding in the powers given to the subject those of all surrounding States. Having given his people all they had asked for, including a Radical Government, he abdicated, appointing three Regents, of whom only one, M. Ristitch, commanded the slightest consideration, not

[1] He himself told me that the entire responsibility of that disastrous campaign was his. "We were slowly being crushed out of the Balkan councils," he remarked, "and you know the proverb, 'A naked man jumps farthest.' We had nothing to lose, we were so low." It cannot be said, though, that the event bore out his theory, for the blow dealt at Servia was a very serious one.

to speak of respect. The public reputation of General Belimarkovitch was very tainted, and General Protitch had apparently no qualifications for the honour bestowed upon him, beyond the fact that his wife was notoriously King Milan's first mistress, and that he had a great deal to do with the royal relations established with the second. The abdication was the death-knell of Russian influence, and though as long as M. Persiany remained in Belgrade he was able to stem the Austrian tide to a certain degree, it crept remorselessly round, up to, and through Servia. One great weapon in Austrian hands is the pig and prune trade, on which Servia practically depends for her existence. Any recalcitrancy can always be met by the screw being here put on, and a veto on the export of Servian swine is sufficient to bring Servia to her knees at any moment. For a long while the Servians neglected their ties with the Sublime Porte, and it was not until Stamboloff began to give indications of a Progressist policy in regard to Macedonia that they awoke to the fact that they were asleep, whilst their neighbour was busy trying to take away landmarks in the night. In speaking later of Macedonia this subject will be more fully gone into, but it was at the time of my residence at Belgrade that the struggle began in earnest, which has been going on ever since, to obtain a preponderance of bishops and schools in this or that district of the province. The outlook at the moment of writing these lines has not improved very sensibly. King Milan has come back and implanted Dr. Vladan Georgevitch—one of his most faithful *âmes damnées*—as President of the Council. The appointment naturally called forth all manner of criticism and official denials of King Milan's having exercised any influence in the matter, but it is perfectly certain that neither the young King nor any political party would have dreamt freely of giving Dr. Georgevitch his present position. He has never been taken *au sérieux* even in Servia, and was always looked upon as rather an amusing boon companion—and absolutely nothing else. The nomination either means that there is not a single man in Servia

fit to take the Presidency, or else that King Milan—perhaps on account of this fact—has resolved to rule himself through a puppet. The experiment may possibly turn out well, for the ex-King has far more statesmanship than any past or possibly prospective Ministers. It is, moreover, an imperative necessity for Servia to maintain the Obrenovitch dynasty, as against a possible return of the old Karageorgievitch, if it wishes to keep its Constitution and democratic privileges. By freely giving these to his people King Milan deserved, if he did not earn, the eternal gratitude of a nation which, though it is far yet from being in a position properly to enjoy and profit by its advantages, dearly loves and prizes the liberties so generously bestowed. Not being now resident in Servia, and therefore not being liable to expulsion for *lèse majesté*, I may perhaps hazard an idea that a change, at least for a season, from the weak and capricious government of King Alexander to the firmer and more decided and experienced rule of his father, each of course exercised constitutionally through Ministers, might not be without good fruit. The difference would be, that under King Alexander, the party in power can do just as it pleases, while under King Milan it would have to do as he pleased. From the fall he experienced at the hands of the Radicals the ex-King learnt his tether, and, at anyrate, he fell gracefully; and the worst that could happen would be another such becoming descent. If, however, King Alexander wrestled and were defeated, his fall would be like Lucifer's, and there would be an end of the Obrenovitches.

CHAPTER VIII

ABOUT this time I indulged in several excursions about the Balkan Peninsula, and for the benefit of any who may feel inclined to follow my footsteps—and they might spend a vacation worse—I will devote this chapter to describing some of these wanderings. The first one on which I will ask the reader to accompany me led me through Macedonia, almost inevitably destined in the future to become one of the great battlefields of Eastern Europe.[1] I left Nisch on a September morning, and we ran through the usually green and crop-laden country connecting Servia and Macedonia, seeing nothing but fields burnt almost to a cinder from the prolonged drought, with the soil split into gaping cracks, and the maize and vines dusty, draggled, and half dead. Owing to general slackness, and what is called "manœuvring," we managed to lose an hour and a half in the advertised five hours' run to the Turkish frontier. Manœuvring is the favourite pastime of the Servian State Railways, and appears to consist in chopping the train in half, taking a moiety away bodily and depositing it on a siding, and then bringing it back again, carriage by carriage. At least it gives time and opportunity to the guards and employés to smoke cigarettes and chat with their friends. In our train was a paymaster who distributed a fortnight's wages at every station. The unfortunate officials of the Army Police and other administrations, few of whom had seen a farthing of their salaries for months past, watched the more lucky railway men with envious eyes. So far as I could learn, the line alone pays regularly, and is obliged to do so to justify its arbitrary confiscation from the

[1] Much of what follows appeared at the time, in substance and often in the same form, in the columns of the *Standard*.

French. At Lebiftcheh we were transferred to one of Baron Hirsch's conveyances, which was a change for the better. The ragged and lazy Servians were replaced by equally dilapidated and casual Turks, who, however, on the whole, were more polite. Across the frontier the landscape is, if possible, more naked than in Servia. At half-past five we reached Gradsko, and there I engaged a landau with three bony and unhappy-looking horses and a Turkish Jehu. The conveyance itself must have dated from at least fifty years back, and beyond its framework only possessed relics of springs and cushions. Being already very late, Mustapha was anxious to start at once; and being of quite the same mind myself, no time was cut to waste, and in ten minutes we were on our way. The road, like most Turkish ones, has been well made, but was in ruinous condition. For the first ten miles or so it leads through parched and barren fields, with here and there a cemetery by the roadside. The tombstones are mere slices of stone, stuck pell-mell into the ground, like broken glass on the top of a wall. Some of them are six feet high, others six inches, piled at all possible angles, in desolate disorder. As night came on we reached a picturesque gorge, but the brilliant moonlight only showed outlines, and one missed all colour. Towards eleven we rattled rocking down a hill towards the khan at Rakli, where we stopped to bait for an hour or two. A few hundred yards before reaching it, however, the horses shied violently, and very nearly precipitated us all to the bottom of a ravine. It turned out that there was nothing more terrible than a dead donkey in the way, but there was plenty of evidence that it had lain there some time. It did not seem to be anybody's particular business to pitch it over the edge of the precipice, and I daresay it lay there a month or two longer. At Rakli I was ushered into a clean-looking room with three beds, and assured that I could have it all to myself and had nothing to fear. It was somewhat late to sling the hammock which I always carried with me, so I thought I would try my fate. In half an hour a plate of meat, with bread and cheese and a bottle of wine, was

produced and disposed of, and I repaired to my chamber. Alas, I was by no means alone! and in less than ten minutes beat a retreat to the carriage, where I wrapped myself in a rug and snoozed till three, when we started again. After Rakli the road grew worse than ever, but towards ten o'clock we climbed the side of a mountain, from the summit of which we could make out Perlipeh in the plain below. The town is entered from the Christian side, and we passed half a dozen churches with Greek and Bulgarian inscriptions over the portals before crossing a bridge over what ought to be a watercourse, but which was then a dry sewer, to reach the Moslem Quarter. Mustapha, of course, would not dream of putting up at any but a Turkish khan. Here we ordered some food, meat, grapes, and beer to be fetched from the other side of the bridge, where we might just as well have stayed. The market-place was very lively in spite of its being Friday. The majority of the traders are Jews and Christians, Wallachs and Bulgarians, and few shops were shut. The centre of the market is occupied by a lofty octagonal clock tower, a hundred feet high, and round its base the fruit and vegetable sellers collect. From this point the bazaars radiate off in various directions. Besides Manchester and native cloths of every colour and texture, the most conspicuous and favourite objects displayed were nails, bullets, horseshoes, and wire.

Perlipeh is the great distributor of civilisation to the peasantry in all the north of the Vilayet, and to judge from the prominence given to these articles the native consumption must be enormous. I noticed with some curiosity that instead of being insured in French, Austrian, or Roumanian companies, many of the shops had the insurance plate of an English office nailed to their fronts. Neither the "Credit Foncier" nor the "Dacia Romana" seemed to have a single client. At noon we started again after paying the heavy bill of one franc for luncheon. Living is distinctly cheap, if not luxurious, in Macedonia. At Rakli, for my dinner, my uninhabitable three-bedded room, and two good cups of coffee and milk before leaving,

the reckoning was two francs fifty centimes, travelling, too, in the style of a Rothschild. It was, however, with weary limbs and an aching head that I clambered once more into my landau. Fourteen hours of it had left me with the sensation of having been soundly thrashed with a shillelagh, and there were still six more hours to come. All things have an end, however, and a little before sunset we clattered over the stones of Monastir, and I was hospitably taken in by our Vice-Consul, Mr. Shipley, who latterly acted as British Delegate on the Sassoun Commission, where he earned his C.M.G.

The town, which is conspicuously neat and clean, is very prettily situated, only coming into view just before you reach it, lying as it does behind a spur of the mountains amongst a wilderness of field and vineyard. It has a long boulevard by the banks of the Dragor, furnished with seats, and very well kept as a promenade. The Government House is a handsome and spacious building, and several of the private houses are quite little palaces. Officially the population is put down at thirty-five thousand, but probably forty-two thousand would be nearer the mark, and it is rapidly increasing. All the wealth and intelligence among the inhabitants are to be found amongst the Wallachs, who number some twelve thousand. There are eight or nine thousand Bulgarians, the remainder of the population being Turks, with the exception of some thousands who are Jews. Such trade as is not in the hands of the Wallachs goes to the Bulgarians. The Wallachs are a most desirable element, as they take nothing out of the country and are always bringing something in. Each year they wander forth in search of work of any and every kind. In the vilayet of Monastir it is reckoned that the annual exodus is about thirty thousand, each of whom brings, or sends, back on an average twelve Turkish pounds; so that they increase the internal capital by over three hundred thousand a year. The great aim and object of the Hellenic Propaganda is to persuade these Wallachs to call themselves Greeks.[1]

[1] After the late war, it is worth noting that genuine petitions were

In Macedonia the word "Greek" denotes an ecclesiastical rather than an ethnological classification. At least in the neighbourhood of Monastir the thoroughbred Greek is a rarity. The Wallachs of course, relics of the days of Trajan probably, are of Roumanian origin and distinctly Latin proclivities, having nothing Hellenic about them except their profession of the Orthodox faith. Nevertheless, whilst tenaciously adhering amongst themselves to their own Latin speech, they are alive to the advantages of learning Greek for commercial purposes, and consequently often send their children to Greek schools. It is, however, significant that in Monastir there are some three hundred influential families who have set themselves in open opposition even to giving the Hellenic Propagandists the meagre colour for the statement that they are Greeks by patronising their schools. This group has founded purely Roumanian schools, and is on the best of terms with the Ottoman authorities, to whom it is often able to furnish valuable information concerning Greek intrigues. It was this party which, in a great measure, was instrumental in the discovery of the seditious correspondence which was being carried on two years ago between the Greek Consul and a Greek inspector of schools which led primarily to the recall of the Consul, and gradually since to the decline of the position of the Greeks in the province. Up to that time the Greeks had had matters very much their own way, but the Turkish authorities having been put on their guard, began instituting regular domiciliary visits, and established so strict a watch on the doings of the community that they were, so to speak, knee-haltered. Of course the result of the last war has entirely extinguished any hopes the Greeks could ever entertain of sharing the ultimate partition of Macedonia except by favour of one or other of the Powers. When I was in Monastir a very pretty little quarrel was blazing between the Greek powers, temporal and spiritual. The Greek Consul, M. Fontanas, was a Catholic, but a

received by the Porte from Wallach villages begging to be left under the suzerainty of the Sultan in preference to Greek rule.

clear and level-headed patriot. The Archbishop, on the other side, was an honest and generally respected prelate, whose fault was that he played too much the game of the Extremists, and allowed them to make a tool of him. When differences arose between M. Fontanas and the more violent of his colony, the Archbishop was persuaded to write three letters, one to M. Dragoumis, one to the Syllogos, and one to the Phanar. According to custom letters are allowed to be carried by hand provided they are duly stamped. From motives of economy, peculiarly Grecian, all the letters were put into one envelope; but the post-office clerk in stamping it felt that there was more than one enclosure, and his suspicions being aroused, he opened the packet and read the contents. Thus for want of two piastres the intrigue was discovered.

The letters were all in the same strain, to the effect that if his twenty-five years of service were of any value he begged that weight might be given to his petition for the removal of M. Fontanas, the Catholic Consul, and the payment henceforth direct to himself, or to the Ephors, instead of through the Consulate, of the yearly subvention of twelve hundred pounds. The letters were forwarded, nevertheless, but the answer from M. Dragoumis, sent through M. Fontanas, stated that the Archbishop's request had caused the greatest dissatisfaction, and that, seeing the disgraceful state of ecclesiastical affairs at Monastir, the authorities at headquarters had decided henceforth to discontinue the allowance altogether. I believe as a matter of fact that this was a mere *brutum fulmen*, and that after a month or so payments were resumed; but it had the effect of altogether crushing the Extremists, and the unfortunate Archbishop's furniture was being offered for sale when I left.

The rise of the Bulgarian has been coincident with the fall of the Greek. It has been said that a ready frontier might be found for Bulgaria in the old Roman Via Ignatia running from Salonica to Ochrida, and a visit to Macedonia would convince the most sceptical that north of such an imaginary boundary the enormous

majority of the population is essentially Bulgarian in speech, manners, and aspirations. Since one of the questions most hotly disputed for the last years, and now again threatening to assume formidable proportions, is whether Greeks, Serbs, or Bulgars have by numerical superiority the right to especial protection and favour, or, in other words, to put it more plainly, are the ultimate heirs to Macedonia, a few facts bearing on the point may not be out of place. One of the first and most crucial tests natural to apply in such cases is that of language. Excluding Northern Albania, nobody will deny that Bulgarian is not only the dominant but almost the universal tongue of the whole Christian and part of the Moslem population of Northern Macedonia. It is not the pure Bulgarian of Sofia or Eastern Roumelia, but is unmistakably Bulgarian in contradistinction to Servian. Whereas a Serb, as I had frequent occasion to notice, fails to make himself understood, a Bulgarian is quite at home. The constructions used are almost entirely Bulgarian, especially in the added article, which is unknown in Servia, and even where the accent occasionally follows the Servian rule the Bulgarian pronunciation of the same words is always readily accepted. Furthermore, one had only to ask a peasant, "Are you a Serb?" for him to stare stupidly; whereas to the question, "Are you a Bulgar?" his face lit up with a broad grin, and he replied; "Yes, yes; we are Bulgars!"

A somewhat amusing and characteristic illustration of the power of the Bulgarian language occurred to me at a monastery, where I asked the Pope, "Is this a Greek or a Bulgarian Monastery?" He replied, "We are Greeks," but on my addressing a few words to him in that tongue, he answered in Bulgarian that he could not speak Greek. He was Greek in so far that he was under the Greek Bishopric, but all the services had to be conducted in Bulgarian, firstly, because they had nobody to officiate in Greek; and secondly, "because nobody would understand a word if they did!" Wishing to go still further, and see what Servian proclivities or traditions might have

remained, I asked him which was his *Slava* or patron saint. The institution of the Slava is one of the fundamental bases, not only of religious, but of social life in Servia. This Pope did not even know what a Slava was. But the equivalent Bulgarian term of Slujba was, of course, quite familiar to him. There are many similar instances, and an explanation of this strange state of affairs must be sought in the keenness of the ecclesiastical contest for supremacy in Macedonia. The Bulgarians, who declare themselves members of the Schismatic Exarchate, have to pay their church dues, and, *ceteris paribus*, those who remain under the Greek Phanar ought to pay theirs; but the Greeks are so anxious to claim every man they can that they are willing to admit Bulgarians free of charge. It is, of course, not done openly, but simply the dues are not reclaimed, since, though there are Bulgarians who prefer to belong nominally to the hitherto dominant and mother Church of the Greeks without payment towards its support, there is not one who, if he had to pay somebody, would not at once declare himself a schismatic Bulgarian. It is probable, though, that the appointment of Bulgarian bishops will put an end to this running with the hare and hounds, since the Bulgarian dissidents, who were formerly made to feel their outcast spiritual condition in a hundred material ways, now find themselves strong in the possession of a Metropolitan of equal power and dignity to that of the Greek orthodoxes.

The population of Macedonia is roughly distributed much as follows. The whole of the vast plains are cultivated and inhabited exclusively by Bulgarians, who hold and till their fields as "colons" of the Turkish Beys. They are surrounded along the feet of the mountains by a chain of Albanian villages, and the towns are peopled with Wallachs and Turks. As the Bulgarians grow richer, however, they take to trading on their own account, and the flourishing town of Perlipeh is now three-parts Bulgarian. I was told that from end to end of Macedonia the news of the nomination of Bulgarian bishops had spread till there was not a man, woman, or child ignorant of his

improved condition. Owing, nevertheless, to the peculiar unemotional character of the race, it has not much excited or puffed them up, nor have they given any occasion of uneasiness to the Ottoman authorities, who, though reticent on this, as on most other religious or administrative questions, are fully alive to the commercial value of these Bulgarian Rayahs, and to the political need of keeping them in good humour, always with a due consideration for the maintenance of the Sultan's authority. The means employed may be, and doubtless often is, both rough and ready, but I did not find that the Bulgars grumbled much, and, in comparison with their fellow-Christians, they seemed the best off of all. Besides Christian Bulgarians, there are some thousands of Moslem Bulgarians, or Pomaks, who still keep up a good deal of sympathy for their native country. A striking instance of this was afforded to my knowledge when the Vilayet Council was sitting at Monastir. Malik Bey, an influential Moslem, was speaking to a rich fellow-member, a Christian, in the language which they both understood best. The Vali remarked to him that he was talking Bulgarian—to which he replied, "Certainly; at root we are all Bulgarians here." After all that has been and is being written on the oppression of the Bulgars by the Turks, it was pleasing to be able to note on the spot the excellent terms on which they lived, and the entire freedom of speech and customs accorded to Christians in so comparatively remote a centre as Monastir.

It is in such towns, and there alone, that an accurate idea can be formed of the struggle between the Balkan nationalities. The chances at the time of my visit seemed all in favour of the Bulgarians, who since 1764, when the Porte placed them ecclesiastically under the Greek Patriarchate, have maintained a dogged fight against this episcopal subjection. They closed their churches that a Greek liturgy should not be read in them, and as soon as a Greek bishop entered to officiate, no Bulgarian priest would take part in the service. After the stranger's departure, the floor was ostentatiously swept, as if to do

away with all traces of impurity. The contest went on passively all over Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Eastern Roumelia, until in Bulgaria proper they carried the day. They have now won it in Macedonia. Up till twenty years ago the Servian Church might, by offering emancipation from the Greek thrall, have gained over the entire Slav population of the Turkish provinces. But it foolishly missed its opportunity—gone never to recur. The protection Servia can now afford is not at all more efficacious than that which Sofia can offer, and, regrettable as it may appear from a Servian point of view, the old dream of reconstituting the ancient empire must be considered as for ever dispelled. The only lever upon which the Servians could rely was the Church, and that has now lost its *fulcrum*, since the Bulgarians to-day have their own Church in Macedonia, giving birth to a new national spirit and pride. The Greek element has still fewer chances of success in Macedonia proper. Putting on one side the war of this year (1897), the only opening they really ever had was in Southern Albania. But in order to win they must entirely change their methods. The Albanian Beys are nobles and chieftains with a vast amount of native dignity, and it is only by flattering their weaknesses that any Hellenic propaganda can be pushed. Hitherto it has been thought sufficient, as one of these Albanians remarked to me, to send "a barber from Athens" to civilise and conciliate the haughty clansmen.

After my observations, I wrote at that time—in 1889—in the *Standard*: "To summarise the situation of Northern Macedonia, and by this term I mean the country north of a line drawn between Salonica and Durazzo, there is no risk in stating that the Servian element is practically non-existent; in fact, as one of the local papers puts it, 'You must go out with a lantern to search for a Servian.' The Greek cause has in itself the seeds of dissolution, and the Wallach community, on whom it reckons for disciples, is Greek in nothing but faith. The Bulgarian, on the other hand, is favoured by the Turks, enjoys an enormous numerical superiority, and is thoroughly solid both here

in Macedonia, and in its relations with Bulgaria proper." The only modification which I might now feel inclined to make in the above is that the Ottoman Government has lately been according at least equal, and sometimes superior privileges, scholastic and episcopal, to the Servians as to the Bulgars.

I spent a week or ten days very pleasantly at Monastir, principally in short shooting excursions with Mr. Shipley. I only had an ancient French pin-fire gun, borrowed from the French Vice-Consul at Nisch, and my companion had not been out probably a dozen times in his life. We had no dogs either, but nevertheless succeeded in keeping all the Consular Corps supplied with hares and partridges, which literally swarm in the neighbourhood. Though my gun persistently hung fire even when it finally went off, and refused to act at least once out of three attempts, we used to bring back fifty or sixty of the little grey birds in an afternoon. Our great exploit was a bear hunt, organised to compass the destruction of one of these animals, reputed to be of great size and ferocity, and to roam the suburbs of the town. Besides ourselves, two or three foreigners joined the party, one gentleman with the avowed object only of shooting any stray hares or foxes which might be beaten out of cover, as he declared his confidence in the non-existence of the bear, which he said he would never dream of running any risk of meeting. We started one evening and rode out to a village where the beaters were supposed to assemble under the direction of a sporting Pope, who was admitted by universal consent to be the champion hunter of Monastir. This divine, however, disappointed us by coming in soon after sunset and saying that he had a baptism, or burial, or some other office, to perform that night; but he promised to meet us at the rendezvous next morning at daybreak. This plunged some of our foreign friends into despondency, as they declared nobody but an Englishman would ever think of going out shooting with a priest, the mere sight of one being quite enough to cast ill-luck over a day's bag.[1]

[1] In the same manner it is against all etiquette abroad to wish a departing

Early as we rose next morning, to ride for an hour or so to the top of one of the hills, we found the priest contentedly sitting on a rock waiting for us, and he at once assumed command, placing the guns along the tops of the hills, and beating the valleys up to us. This went on through all the supposed favourite haunts of the bear without result, and at five the Pope very regretfully intimated that his clerical duties again called him away. He besought us, however, not to lose hope, and to beat a small ravine close to the gardens of Monastir, where we should inevitably find our quarry. As it was more or less on our way, we followed his advice, and I posted the guns this time, taking myself the head of the gully, past which the bear must come if bear there was. Almost all the beaters were armed with guns and rifles, in spite of my remonstrances, and two of these ruffians, instead of going into cover, scaled the bare cliff opposite, and sat down overlooking the thicket. The shouting and drumming had not been long in progress before cries of "The bear!" were raised, and just as I expected, he came along the ravine straight for me. I could hear him crashing through the bushes, and counted him as good as dead, when my two scouts began yelling at the top of their voices, and rushed down to where they could see the bear, firing wildly as they went. This, of course, turned him, and I was so furious that I had to throw away my rifle, else I verily believe I should have shot one of my disturbers "by mistake." In another moment a regular volley broke out just on the line of guns, and was continued till about forty shots must have been fired. Hurrying up, I just descried my bear going very slowly up the mountain, but still too fast to give any hope of intercepting him. It seems he had made straight for the hare-shooter, and almost knocked him down as he rolled past within a foot of him. This hero

chasseur "good luck." I have known a very keen sportsman simply return back from his door, whence he was sallying forth with his dogs, and give up his day, because somebody, with the best of intentions, wished him good luck. A Frenchman always says, "Mauvaise chance!" and a Russian, "May you see neither fur nor feather!"

had only small shot in his gun, but nevertheless let fly, and then half a dozen beaters joined in. As he was nearing a stream, the bear was hard hit by one of the bullets, and was distinctly seen to lie down for a moment in the water, and both the banks were dappled with blood. The next time he appeared, though, he was half a mile off, well out of range, and going strong if deliberately. We never saw or heard of that bear again, but it took me several days to recover my equanimity. Monastir lost its charm for me, and we arranged a picnicking excursion towards the Greek frontier, consisting of the Russian Consul, M. Demeric; the Greek, M. Fontanas; the Servian, M. Body; Shipley, and myself. We two shared a carriage, the usual rickety old carcase, with four horses of uncertain age and decided unsoundness, harnessed abreast, and left at five in the morning. The first rain for several months had fallen the day before, and the summit of the Peristeri was capped in snow, whilst a cool fresh breeze fanned the dried-up plains of Monastir. The first village passed on the road was Negotchaneh, where all the notables, assisted by the major part of the peasants, were engaged in skinning and dissecting an ox which had been slaughtered by the roadside. At this stage one of our carriage springs broke, which augured ill for the future, but after patching it up with string it held good for the rest of the journey in some mysterious manner, although the vehicle ever afterwards had a disagreeable list to the off side, making it impossible either to sit or to keep the luggage on the near without slipping. Later, the brilliantly whitewashed walls of the Church of Vrbina shone gaily through the trees, and we pulled up at a neat-looking khan kept by a Wallach. The whole village, however, is Bulgarian, and the church has a curious story. It was built by the schismatic villagers on a piece of ground which happened to belong to an Orthodox Greek convent. Nothing was said till the church was completed, when the Greeks claimed it. The result of a lawsuit established their title to the ground, and as neither party could or would buy the other out, the church remained

unconsecrated till a few days before our seeing it—a deplorable monument of religious bickering.

After leaving Vrbina, the road is somewhat monotonous, running mile after mile across the flat, till at length Banitza is sighted on the left and Florina on the right, the one perched half-way up the mountain, the other far away at its foot. Here we dived into a gorge, and then wound slowly upwards till the summit was reached and we looked down on another plain, and a glistening sheet of water—the Petrosco Lake—beneath us. This lake has sandy shores, without a tree or rush on its edges, and is probably brackish, though the peasants declare it is drinkable and contains fish. A few kilometres to the right of the main road is the Bulgarian village of Eksi Soo, or Bitter Water, and an extremely nasty beverage it is. The inhabitants, however, have none other, and seem to thrive. A strange pungent smell assails one all round Eksi Soo, which proceeds from the sheaves of the aniseed plant drying in front of every cottage. It is used for flavouring *mastic*, or *raki*, and constitutes one of the principal industries of the place. Continuing from Eksi Soo, we crossed a neck of the Sari Gueul Lake, or rather marsh. Most of it was then dry, but in the distance the sun glinted on water under the hills.

We were now well in the brigand districts, a band of five or six having been captured only a few months previously on the edges of the Sari Gueul. It was six o'clock already when we reached Kailar, and some of our companions were rather for passing the night there, but the place did not look inviting. We had already emerged from the Bulgarian zone, and south of Eksi Soo were amongst Turks and Greeks. A very mixed crowd was hanging about the gates of the khan, most of them having the appearance of natives of Asia Minor, amongst them being a Soudan Arab, a rich man, apparently, who had come down from Uskub on business. He was much surprised at being addressed in vernacular Arabic. The Caimacam, who had only lately been appointed, was, like most of his *confrères*, an Albanian; indeed, the patronage

of official posts in Macedonia was then principally in the hands of Dervish Pasha at Constantinople, who named Albanians as Governors, Caimacams, and Mudirs of every district. The lights were already being lit as we left Kailar with a special mounted guide to point out the dangerous parts of the road, which, except in the matter of bridges, was in fairly good repair. These, however, are mostly broken down, and have to be avoided by a détour in the fields, or through the then dry river-beds. Throughout the Monastir vilayet the highways were creditably kept, but in the Salonica province they were detestable, and I know not which were the weariest, the jaded and flogged horses, or the sore and shaken foreigners sitting behind them. It was just ten at night as we rattled over the stones and drew up before the principal hostelry of Kojaneh. Those who have performed similar journeys, and they alone, may imagine our condition after seventeen hours cramped up in a springless carriage, which always went too fast to allow of one's getting out and walking. Those who have not tried it can never gain an idea of what it is from any description. The khan proprietor was profuse in his promises of producing anything and everything, and in answer to whatever question answered "Yes." Amongst other products of the country he thus pleaded to having what every Englishman most abhors at night, and was much put out when he discovered the mistake he had made in his zeal.

The Caimacam of Kojaneh was a jovial Albanian, who had spent most of his life, as he frankly admitted, as a Bashi Bozook. He could neither read nor write Turkish nor any other language—a decided drawback to a man's exercising his powerful jurisdiction over a population the majority of which are more or less educated Christians. At the same time, he was not disliked, and the worst complaint brought against him was his exaggerated idea of his own importance—a fault common to many greater men. A good deal was being said about an alleged abuse of power on his part, and our Vice-Consular party was at some pains to find out the real truth of the story,

which was arrived at not without some difficulty, and was as follows. It is worth giving at length as an illustration of habitual distortion of facts. The original version, which aroused much indignation at Athens, and, *magnas componere parvis*, at Monastir, was that the Turks had thrown a dozen influential Greeks into prison on evidence obtained by force, and without giving them a hearing, had condemned them to various terms of imprisonment. By Greek, of course, was meant not Greek subjects, but Rayahs, of Greek faith and speech. The actual circumstances were these. Some time ago a Greek doctor of the name of Chiminaki made a large fortune, that is to say, about fifteen thousand pounds, and left Kojaneh. Amongst his relatives and presumptive heirs was a certain Rompapa, related by marriage to the Mayor of Kojaneh. This man conceived the idea of getting rid of other possible co-heirs, and assassinated two of them without punishment. This he did by sending armed scoundrels to their houses, and the murders were put down vaguely to robbers. Partly in order to get rid of the remaining heirs, and partly to please the Mayor, who had shielded him, and who was at variance with the Greek Metropolitan, Rompapa concocted a plan whereby the ends of both might be served. A fictitious robbery was effected at Rompapa's, and he complained to the Caimacam, saying he knew the culprits. On being asked, he readily produced a list of about forty names. The Caimacam then summoned the Ikhtiar Medjlissy, or Council of Elders (Christian), and told them they must confirm the accusations of Rompapa, or at anyrate find out the robbers, as they were the representatives of the town, and on them rested the responsibility for knowing the characters of their fellow-townsmen. There is a beautiful simplicity about this method of pinning criminals, but I only record what actually took place! Amongst the Elders were several creatures of Rompapa, with the Mayor, who quickly picked out eleven names as being those of men of notorious ill-fame and in league with brigands. The latter part of the indictment would generally apply to

about half the population of these parts. Rompapa had, however, the cunning to include one or two real bad characters in his list together with those of whom he wished to be rid. This made his accusations more plausible, but still many Elders refused to sign. Upon this the Caimacam intervened, and declared that after the fashion of British juries they would be locked up until they were of one mind. After an hour or two, seeing no alternative before them, all signed the list of eleven names; and the men, several of them respectable and influential citizens, were marched in chains to Serfitcheh, where they were tried by court-martial and condemned to twelve years' imprisonment at Fazan. The Despot (or Greek Bishop), some of whose chief supporters were among the prisoners, complained to Constantinople, and a Commissioner was sent to inquire into this and another case. He was still inquiring, and the men were still in prison at Serfitcheh, awaiting deportation to Fazan. Rompapa, of course, gained his end, since few convicts ever return from Fazan, and at anyrate he was quit of his rivals for twelve years. On the other hand, the Anti-Despot party won a point in the game, though it was by no means sure that they would come off victorious in the end. The reason for the ill-feeling between the Despot and the Caimacam proved to be this. On the evening of the 1st of May an annual fair was in course of preparation at the village of Aya Paraskevi. Four soldiers were sent to keep order, and they billeted themselves on one of the largest houses, and drank freely. In the evening, when thoroughly drunk, they pursued the women of the house, who barricaded themselves in one of the rooms, whilst their men-folk hastened to Kojaneh to complain. Having roused up the Despot, they went immediately at midnight to wake the Caimacam, who was sulky, and offered them no redress. In consequence the Despot wrote a formal report to Stamboul, which annoyed the Caimacam, but beyond this there appeared to be no bad blood between them. The incident is only mentioned as a possible reason for the Caimacam's feeling a

certain satisfaction at sending the Despot's friends to prison.

Though a degree of responsibility, of course, rested with the Caimacam, the chief blame undoubtedly fell on the Christians themselves, who, even in a small place like Kojaneh, are torn with the same dissensions which disgrace their mutual relations all over the Ottoman Empire, and bring the name into contempt with the Moslems. If the Turk occasionally profits by them to gratify a personal pique, it seems scarcely fair at once to saddle him with an atrocity. Of the proceedings at the court-martial of Serfitcheh we were unable to obtain absolutely reliable information, but probably the witnesses brought by Rompapa and his party, either truly or falsely, swore political evidence, otherwise the Court would hardly have inflicted such heavy sentences. As regards the Caimacam, the conviction we carried away was that he had simply acted according to his lights, in consonance with information laid, and pressure put upon him by a strong division of the Christian population. The only hope of getting at the truth in such cases is by seeking for motives, and he had no personal motive whatever for punishing innocent Christians. Yet this case was dished up in the local press all over the Balkans as a Turkish atrocity on peaceable Christians.

As far as liberty of the subject goes in daily life, the town of Kojaneh might be in Servia, Roumania, or Bulgaria. The Christians have their church—a very fine one—in which some of us attended a baptismal service, and a lofty belfry tower (a great sign of religious freedom) dominates the whole place, whilst there is not a mosque for miles round. The only Moslems in Kojaneh were the few officials of the Konak, and a force of six policemen, perhaps a dozen or fifteen in all. The Greek language is universally spoken, and the Despot possesses one of the handsomest houses in the principal street. This prelate, with whom I had several conversations, professed himself fairly satisfied with his position generally, and with a little knowledge of the state of affairs to help one, it was easy

to trace the few difficulties he had to complain of rather to intrigues of his flock than to any abuse of authority by the Turks. Lying as it does far out of the beaten track, in the heart of a Turkish vilayet, Kojaneh may be taken as a fair sample of the life of a Christian town in European Turkey. There may be isolated instances of even more happily constituted communities, as there certainly are numerous ones of worse-off towns and districts; but taking the good with the bad, Kojaneh may stand as an average picture, and it is for this reason that I have devoted so much space to a sketch of it.

The fatigues of our drive to Kojaneh, and the lively night passed by the foreign Vice-Consuls in a Greek house, so damped their ardour that they elected to leave it to their colleague Shipley to prosecute inquiries further. Shipley and myself had slept at the khan, the former being one of those happy mortals impervious to the insect creation, and I, in my hammock, being out of reach. Our next halting-place was Shatista, of whose Mudir we had heard gruesome tales along the road. These turned out to be only too true, and a list of this man's misdeeds would fill several pages.[1] He openly boasted of the number of victims to his own hand in the Bulgarian massacres, and shamelessly employed the Imperial troops to protect him in his acts of rapine and violence.

At Lapsista, again, we stayed for a day or two, and gathered a good deal of information, returning back by way of Kastoria and Florina to Monastir. I may add that neither such details as were published at the time in the *Standard*, nor the repeated and strongly-worded reports of the Monastir Consular Corps to their Constantinople Embassies, had the slightest effect upon the position of the Mudir of Shatista, beyond causing him to be shifted to another post not far off, where he continued unmolested to harry the populace.

Another very interesting trip I took, on this occasion unaccompanied, was across Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro. Embarking at Belgrade, I steamed to Brod

[1] See Appendix A, p. 165.

with a mongrel Austrian servant, who had at some time of his career been a coachman, and pretended to a great knowledge of horseflesh. At Brod I bought a little pony and rough country cart, on which to carry my belongings, especially a photographic camera, and we started for Serajevo. The first day took us to Dervent, and the second to Kotorsko, and by then I was heartily tired of Franz, who was one of the most lazy, incompetent, and complete fools I have ever employed. I therefore packed a few toilet necessaries in a small bag slung over my shoulder, and instructing him to meet me at Serajevo, went off on foot before dawn, not stopping till I reached Zeptcheh, a distance by milestones on the road of about ninety kilometres, though now and again I took a short cut. At noon I passed Tesanj, where the Austrian police made an attempt to stop me, and soon after crossed a river at Maglai, where the Austrian cavalry was so fearfully cut up during the insurrection. Both Tesanj and Maglai are wonderfully pretty and picturesque. From Zeptcheh I went on to Vranduk, where I had some food, and so to Zenitza, where the great convict prisons are. I stayed here a day looking over them, being rather interested in this branch of administration since the days when I had been sent with Colonel Chermside to report on Egyptian Prisons. Like everything else the Austrians have done in Bosnia, the Zenitza establishment is a perfect model. There are most extensive workshops in connection with it, and I purchased several little odds and ends as souvenirs, amongst others a carved wooden spoon. On leaving Zenitza, I took it easy, and after reaching Visoko, noticed that I had somehow lost my spoon. The following afternoon I entered Serajevo, and called on the Governor to report myself. There appeared, however, to be not much necessity for my giving him any information as to my route, as he knew every house at which I had stopped, and every man apparently to whom I had spoken, and as I was leaving he presented me with my lost spoon, which had got there before me, as a token of the efficiency of his police. I spent a week at Serajevo, being most

hospitably entreated by our Consul-General, Mr. Freeman, and looked upon by society as an original sort of lunatic, travelling on foot without any wardrobe, on which account I was permitted to attend evening parties in my only rough tweed suit. There are little shops, mostly kept by Jews, in almost every village, and my system was to throw away my underclothing whenever I bought new, so that I never had more to carry than what was on my back. This was a method of travel which hugely diverted the good people wherever I passed; but I can confidently recommend it.

After selling my horse and cart at Serajevo, and sending Franz back to Belgrade, I drove one morning to Ostrova, and then tramped to Mostar, down the magnificent valley of the Narenta, fishing, with but poor success, on the way. Mostar is a lovely old town, and I spent a day or two in roaming about it before sallying forth again to Trebinje, and on to Ragusa, another fine relic of the Italian domination, with the Lion of Saint Marc rampant over many of its old gateways. Here I took steamer, in order to see the beautiful Bocche di Cattaro, at which place I arrived next morning. Ordering a carriage, I sat down to lunch off a giant lobster; but when the vehicle arrived, the driver wanted three napoleons to take me to Cettinje. Thinking this was an attempt at extortion, I pooh-poohed the idea; but Jehu stood firm, till I declared I would rather walk. He smiled sarcastically, and replied, "As your excellency pleases," and went away. After some difficulty, I engaged a guide, a youth of about seventeen, who asked for five out of the twenty francs I had been obliged to promise, to leave with his mother. He soon after appeared in a new pair of *opankas*, or leather sandals, and looked rather pityingly at my heavy walking-boots as we started at noon in a blazing sun to go up the face of the mountain. Needless to say that, though burdened with my greatcoat and bag, and later on with most of my other clothing, he went up much faster than I did, and kept repeating what a mistake my boots were. On reaching the top at last, we could throw

a stone down to fall within a few yards of where we had begun the ascent, so sheer is the climb. The carriage-road circumvents the difficulty by about forty elbows. After this, we went gaily across the Negush plain; but though our pace was now good, we were caught up by a Montenegrin girl, to whose care my young rascal, without asking my consent, transferred the whole of my kit, which she hoisted on her back, and, unfurling her umbrella, continued like a hare.

I remonstrated with him, on his laziness first, and then on the risk of losing the things; but he shrugged his shoulders, and said he had already paid her—two francs, it transpired—and that we should find everything right enough at the hotel. After Negush plain, there is another lesser mountain to top, after which a precipitous descent into the Cettinje plain, across which runs the last ten or twelve miles of road. On the summit of the second range we rested a few minutes, and then I took my guide down remorselessly at a gallop. Before we reached the bottom he cried for mercy, saying his sandals were cut to pieces and his feet were sore. The advantage was now all on the side of English boots, and as Cettinje was in distant sight, I bade him follow as he liked, and went on by myself, finally reaching the hotel of the Montenegrin capital nearly three-quarters of an hour before the carriage, which had found other customers, and left Cattaro at the same time.[1]

Cettinje is decidedly the queerest capital in Europe. It consists of one long street, with four smaller ones crossing it, and ending vaguely in the fields. The whole town covers, perhaps, thirty or forty acres. The principal

[1] The question of foot-gear is always much debated, but for all-round work I doubt if an English small hobnailed boot is to be beaten. The only thing in my experience to be compared to it is the Russian sandal, which is far more stoutly made than that of any other nation I have seen, and of a kind of leather which is not procurable elsewhere. I have frequently given one of these to be copied, but though the new one looked all correct when delivered, a few hours' use in marsh, or snow, or mud, reduced it to a wretched rag of leather, whereas the Russian always keeps its shape, is an almost perfect protection, whilst affording also perfect freedom to the foot, and is so light as scarcely to drag at all, even after fourteen or fifteen hours' walking.

building is the hotel, which worthily acts as a terminus to the main street. It is a bare and rickety structure, but represents the acmé of luxury at Cettinje. Other public places are the prison, the church, and the school. The first of these lies on the right, and in front of the gates, on a lawn, the prisoners amuse themselves by playing various rude games—bowls, with pieces of rock for balls, leap-frog, and so on. A few of them are engaged in odd building jobs about Cettinje, and others hew wood in the mountain. They are not chained, but seldom appear to think of running away. When a case of evasion happens, one or two fellow-convicts are sent to capture the runaway and bring him back. The theory of setting a thief to catch a thief is here practised most literally and methodically. The only difference, outwardly, between a condemned convict and a free citizen is that the former is deprived of his arms. In Montenegro this is an equal degradation to the usual dress or brand elsewhere. Close to the hotel is the Royal Palace, a whitewashed house with green Venetian blinds, which is popularly supposed to have cost a million of francs, owing to the expense of transporting material. Over against it is a long low red building, known as the "Bigliardo." It received this nickname from an English billiard-table having been set up there. The carrying of this unwieldy piece of furniture by fifty strong men over the mountain was considered, as it really was, a great feat. Whilst the porters struggled manfully under the slate, a pilot stood astride it on high, and shouted his directions as to how best to get round awkward corners. The "Bigliardo" is now used as offices for the different Ministries and as a Parliament House. The church is very small—capable, perhaps, of holding a hundred and fifty people. On either side of the entrance are the tombs of Prince Danilo and his brother Mirko Petrovitch, and in the chancel a sort of sarcophagus, opened only on solemn occasions, containing the embalmed remains of the bishop-prince, Peter the First. Sixty or seventy years ago this monastery, and twenty or thirty cottages round it, represented the town of Cettinje. Behind the monastery is

the famous "Tower of Skulls." In the old days, no Montenegrin was entitled to call himself an able-bodied soldier till he had decorated the tower with a Turkish head. The last occasion on which it showed its ghastly trophies was after the battle of Grahovo, which was fought on the 13th of July 1859. The Montenegrins lost four hundred men, and brought in four thousand skulls—at least so says tradition. The account is more or less confirmed by independent witnesses, one of whom, an Austrian officer, counted two thousand three hundred skeletons on the field several weeks afterwards. The custom has, however, now died out, having been abolished, together with most practices of a similar nature, by the Draconian code and inflexible rule of Danilo I. This prince endeavoured to put an end to the vendetta, amongst other barbarities, and his successor, the present sovereign, carried on the reform with such energy that, although at first his subjects refused to believe in the sincerity of his determination, a few summary executions of offenders sufficed entirely to stamp out the crime, which is now the object of a special convention with Turkey. The last instance of vendetta occurred in the beginning of 1889, when an officer of Prince Nicolas' household, smarting under the *rimbecco*, or taunt of having an unavenged death in his family, decoyed some relatives of the murderer into a boat on the Lake of Scutari, and there assassinated them. With some reluctance, he was sentenced to be shot at Rieka, on the shores of the lake, and he fell before the firing party, with the cry, "Long live Prince Nicolas! Long live his family!"

The sentiment of blind devotion to the sovereign is probably coloured with a religious tinge from the days when the ruler was Vladika, or supreme head of the Church as well as of the State. It is in itself a priceless guarantee of national unity and order. Amidst the dynastic questions which have so often wrecked, and constantly trouble, the Balkans, there never has been, and never will be, any wavering in the loyalty of the Montenegrins for their Prince and his stock. Together with this feeling of almost worshipful reverence for the authority of

the Palace there exists a pleasant sense of individual equality. The Prince has been designed by Providence to govern, but his family and relations are not otherwise distinguished from those around them. The Princess Milena was a peasant girl who one day washed the feet of the royal traveller in her father's cottage, as she would have washed yours or mine. Now she stretches her hand to be kissed by the Grand Dukes of Russia. In the street of Cettinje, or under the Tree of Justice, Prince Nicolas and his family could not be picked out by a stranger from the rest of the crowd. Jealous and proud as they are of certain appurtenances of rank, especially when abroad or in the presence of foreigners, the Montenegrins are essentially republican in their daily habits. A group of three or four may be seen smoking round a table or taking an evening stroll, all dressed alike, with an arsenal in their belts, and the inevitable *strouka*, or goats'-hair blanket, thrown over the shoulder. One is perhaps the hotel proprietor (a Petrovitch, nearly related to the Prince), the second the Minister for War, the third a tailor, the fourth a sheep-owner, and the fifth the President of the Senate. The priests have no distinctive costume, but can readily be recognised by their long hair and beards, and by their carrying no weapons in time of peace. As a rule, the men wear only a moustache, and it is thought slovenly for any but a priest to let the beard grow. The Montenegrin race presents an almost perfect embodiment of all that is admirable in physique. The average height is over six feet, and their frames are splendidly proportioned, broad and deep in the chest and lean in the loins, with long sinewy limbs, and not an ounce of spare flesh. They offer a grand example of the survival of the fittest, as they take very little care of their children, and only the sound and the strong grow up. In after life, too, they are extremely averse to sanitary precautions or medical treatment, and a sick Montenegrin is almost synonymous with a dead man. At least, he at once gives himself up, like a Bedouin for the matter of that, and if he recovers looks upon it as a curious freak in Nature's laws. They have no fear of

death, and endure the severest bodily pain with incredible fortitude. The few who reluctantly submit to losing an arm or a leg invariably refuse anæsthetics, and converse with their friends, smoking a cigarette, whilst the knife and saw are at work. The doctor of the hospital has consequently very little to do beyond making unique observations on this unique people. If the men are remarkable in many ways, their wives and daughters are little less so in others. The Montenegrin ladies play the secondary rôle which always falls to their sex in patriarchal communities. In the lower classes they perform the whole work of the house and fields, tilling the soil, gathering the harvest, and even building their own cottages, whilst their lords and masters play backgammon, or otherwise amuse themselves in each other's company. In the better ranks they still take a very unequal half of life, staying at home all day, and bearing all the little worries of existence, leaving the sweets for mankind. The result of centuries of this training has been to obliterate much of the natural feminine grace and timidity from their manners and character. But whilst treating them with scant outward marks of admiration, the Montenegrin has a profound respect, never better merited, for the virtues of his women, and in few places could a young girl enjoy such liberty of action and movement as in the Black Mountain. It is common to meet a peasant maid of fifteen or sixteen half-way between Cettinje and Cattaro, a journey which she will make two or three times a week, there and back over the thirty miles, to sell eggs and buy fish. And woe betide the man who should offer her the slightest insult by word or look.

After a day or two, I was invited to attend the consecration of a new church on one of the islands on the Scutari Lake, and a special steamer conveyed a select party, including several of the Ministers, to the spot. After the ceremony was concluded, general festivities began, and dancing soon was in full swing. Most of the crowd roasted their food and ate their meals on the grass; but the Ministers had a rough extempore table made of

planks. Rarely have I sat down to a more heavily-laden board or one that was so quickly cleared. It was a veritable Viking feast, and we might have been in a Norwegian fiord for the wildness of the surrounding scenery. The wine was brought round in ordinary zinc pails, and glasses were despised. We were all very sleepy on the homeward journey, I remember, and I fancy there must have been a good deal of what the French playfully call *hair ache* next morning.

At length I exhausted the pleasures of Cettinje, even to a peripatetic circus which in its wanderings had managed to reach this Arcadia, and prepared to continue my tour. My intention was to cross the lake and then strike across Macedonia to Salonica. On reaching Rieka, though, I found no steamer, and to pass the time followed one of the larger streams up towards its source, in the hope of getting a fry of trout for dinner. After half a mile or so, I came to a spot where the water trickled over some large, smooth moss-grown stones, and fell some forty or fifty feet. The breadth was not more than perhaps twenty feet, and as I wished to cross, I cautiously felt my way over, with the water just over the toes of my boots. Halfway I suddenly felt the stone on which I trod shift, and the next moment I was over. I had not time to save myself, or to think more than that there was an end of the *Standard* correspondent. I picked myself up after a while, hardly believing it possible that I was still alive, but found I could walk and that my arms seemed in working order. As soon as I had realised this, I fainted again. This happened once or twice, when some peasant women came up. They were as astonished to see me on my feet as I myself had been to be able to stand, and said that they had seen me fall, turn a complete somersault in the air, and come down "smash" on the rocky bed of the stream, where I had lain till the wet revived me. I had to walk about a mile or more to the inn, supported by the girls, and there I examined myself again, to discover that two of my ribs were certainly damaged, my left wrist badly sprained, and the same arm slightly splintered,

whilst my left thigh was already turning all colours. I must have first touched with my arm and leg, and the arm doubling up, exposed the ribs. My watch, a heavy double hunter, was smashed to atoms, even the jewels in the holes being punched out. It was, in fact, through the watch, so to speak, that my ribs had been cracked. I swallowed a whole decanter of *raki*, but even that could not prevent me from shivering with cold, though it was hot summer. This, of course, was the effect of shock. The only thing I could do was to call for some starch, tear up my shirt, dip it in, and wrap it tightly round my chest and arm. This relieved my breathing considerably, and in an hour or so I began to feel more comfortable. Luckily, a carriage happened to pass later on, and one of the occupants at once volunteered to give me his place to Cettinje, and at the same time his *strouka*, or blanket, so that I was able to reach the hotel late the same night. Next morning the only serious pain I felt was in my sprained wrist, and the Prince's doctor said that he preferred not to remove my extemporary bandages, upon which he could not improve.[1] I stayed in bed the next day, but joined the *table d'hôte* on that following, and on the third was offered a seat down to Cattaro in the carriage of a French tourist and his wife. Having, of course, to give up my prolonged trip, I went slowly back along the Dalmatian coast, stopping a day here and there, and exploring Ragusa, Spalato, Sebenico, Zara, and so to Fiume, where I took train to Agram, to Pesth, and thus to Belgrade, where I was soon playing tennis again.

Before leaving Montenegro I was in want of ready money, and so asked the hotel proprietor to cash a cheque for me. He professed perfect readiness to do so, and I wrote him one for twenty pounds. After a while, he came back rather crestfallen and apologetic, saying that

[1] The official journal contained an account of this accident, concluding with 'Thanks to God and the springiness of his ribs, the Englishman is not much the worse." In this account the height of the fall on to naked rock is put at thirty metres, but anybody can go and see the place and judge for themselves, as it became quite a show, and any peasant of Rieka will point it out, near the old mill.

unfortunately the Finance Minister was away, and the Treasury shut. He had been through the whole town and had collected about fifteen pounds, but there was no more money to be had! Is not this a delightful commentary on the little needs of Montenegrins? The fact is that they oblige each other with necessaries mutually, and have little want of cash. When they require any, they send a "diligence"—namely, a man on a mule—to Cattaro to get it from their bankers, who all live there, and this is what I had to do with my cheque. It would be easy to write a good deal more on the habits and life of Cettinje, and it is somewhat surprising that nobody appears yet to have taken the trouble to do so. Beyond one work in Russian, and another in French, written in reality by a Servian officer, I know of nothing of any value that has been published on Montenegro. Even for a passing visit it would be hard to find any place with so many original attractions. Like Japan, however, it will probably get spoilt as soon as it is included amongst the happy hunting-grounds of the globe-trotter. At present a country where there are no bankers and no lawyers, no Jews and no policemen, without a Custom House or a Passport Office, and with its frontiers marked by hand-posts with Montenegro on one side and the other country on the other, sounds like some imaginary Utopia. But it is a real State, and its name is Montenegro. Long life to it!

Appendix A

The Mudir of Shatista was a comparatively young man of about thirty-five, named Fetih Effendi. At about an hour's distance from Shatista was a village called Serushina, where there was a beautiful meadow through which ran a small stream. This was the spot chosen by Fetih for many of his atrocities. His factotum on such occasions was a ferocious Albanian called Ghikas, who was nominally a watchman or rural policeman of Serushina. Amongst his exploits he once summoned about fifty

notables from Shatista to Serushina, where he shut them up in a convent, where he severely beat and otherwise ill-used them, until they consented to pay money down for their release. Those who could not, or would not, ransom themselves were sent to prison, one to Serfitcheh and twenty to Lapsista, from which place he was accustomed to bring regular troops to overawe the inhabitants when maltreating them. Fetih used openly to boast that with his own hand he had killed 318 at Batak during the massacres. At Shatista we saw dozens of victims of this monster, amongst others, the wife of a young man called Despos, whom Fetih had coveted. He first tried to procure her through an old woman, and then himself told her that he would keep her husband in prison until she yielded. Despos, however, sent her a message from his cell never to give in, and she replied that Fetih might even kill him, but she would still resist. On receipt of this answer, the Mudir cruelly beat Despos, and sent again. Thrice was the same dauntless reply returned, followed each time by merciless punishment on the man, the last time at Serushina, from whence he was brought in an almost senseless condition to Shatista, to the market-place, under an escort of soldiers, who surrounded a clear space to keep off the inhabitants, especially the incensed women, whilst yet a fourth cudgelling was inflicted. When the miserable Despos fell inanimate to the ground, the Mudir, protected by the cordon of military with fixed bayonets, beat him on the head with a heavy stone, and when he moved, did so again, finally leaving him for dead. The cordon then broke up, and Fetih, with Ghikas at his side, strode back through the streets, revolver in hand, asking the crowd what they were loafing about for, and "Was it worth while to pay attention to one Christian dog the more or the less?" When night fell, and not before, a friend picked up the body of Despos, who was tended for fourteen days before he recovered speech. He was at length smuggled secretly away, disfigured and a cripple for life. The complaints of the Bishop and the reports of the Consular body failed to secure any com-

pensation for the man or woman, or punishment for the offender. This story may seem incredible, but both Mr. Shipley and myself had it from the wife, from the friend who had saved Despos, and from a score of eye-witnesses whose narratives agreed in all the particulars given above. I had in my notebook the names of several others whom we saw who had been tortured in a similar manner by Fetih and Ghikas, together with those of men and children who had been killed outright. Yet the only result of all these misdeeds was the removal of Fetih to Venzes, where he was inaugurating another reign of terror.

Other atrocities of every description were perpetrated on pretext of discovering brigands by the Vali Faik Pasha and his subordinates, notably a certain Mehemet, and two Albanians, Shehab ed Deen and his one-armed son, Hassan Abdullah. This latter murdered a Christian named Croteff in cold blood in a dispute over some ground. An Exarchist schoolmaster, Toja by name, swore to avenge his countryman, and the result was a series of tortures. The avengers at last shut themselves up in a village called Smirnievo, whence one of them fired at a soldier. They were then all either killed or made prisoners, Mehemet, commanding the troops, reserving to himself the right of cutting off the heads of the latter with his own sword.

We also saw several unfortunates who had suffered as follows for pretended connection with brigands and acts of brigandage, where the real culprits were perfectly well known. There was Nikka Romeh, who had splinters of pine driven under his nails and then set alight. His fingers were still in a horrible condition. Then Jovan Chanko, an old man of seventy, who had had heated stones placed under his armpits, and the flesh burnt away down to the ribs. Georgi Tanasso had been treated in the same way. Also Rista Giuro. An oven had been prepared for roasting Mitza Jovan alive, but he managed to escape. Pope Tassa had almost all his beard dragged out by the roots. Jovan Vultcha and others, including several women, were terribly beaten, and thirteen were

sent to Florina prison. All these were natives of Gornitchevo. The whole administration of Faik Pasha was one mass of corruption and abuse, and he had commenced long before he attained the position of Vali. During the Bulgarian insurrection all merchants who were interested in that country were forthwith imprisoned, and in spite of hundreds of petitions, signed largely by their Turkish co-townsmen, attesting their honorability, they only succeeded in obtaining their liberty by a lump payment of £3000. Ereira, the Wekil of Alatina, himself a Greek, was one of the most active in this infamous extortion of blackmail. At the Church of Istib, where Faik Pasha was then Mutessarif, plates were held at the door unblushingly for "money presents for the Mutessarif." At the time of my visit a mosque was being built by the Vali, which some called Faik Pasha Djamissy, and others Kassim Agha Djamissy. The reason of this was that the son of Kassim Agha had committed a deliberate murder near Uskub, but had been allowed to go free upon his father's paying £550 to Faik Pasha, which sum was utilised for the construction of a mosque to bear his name!

These facts give a picture of what was happening in certainly one of the best of the Turkish vilayets. As I have said in Chapter VIII., much of the blame rests with the Christian population itself, but monsters of iniquity like Fetih, butchers like Mehemet, and cupid Valis like Faik Pasha, are not rare enough, unhappily, to be considered exceptions, though neither are they so common as to prove the rule.

CHAPTER IX

AT the beginning of 1890 I was still at Belgrade, when rumours reached us that disaffection in Bulgaria had broken out in the shape of a very serious plot, headed by the Macedonian Major Panitza, and implicating a large number of army officers. This offered a good opportunity of leaving Servia, which was by no means a desirable or pleasant residence, and making the acquaintance of a new country and people, and after a hurried good-bye to friends, I turned my back with considerable satisfaction on the White Fortress. On the 9th February I arrived at Sofia, which was far then from being the flourishing little city it has since become. The whole approach from the station gave one the impression of driving though ruins, the fact being that the process of rebuilding was beginning in earnest. To rebuild it was necessary to demolish, and entire quarters were pulled down wholesale. If the inhabitants objected to evacuate their tenements, a squad of sappers simply tore the roofs off from over their heads. As the weather was severe, this rough-and-ready system succeeded admirably.

One of my first visits was to the Palace, where I was received by Count Foras, an amiable old French courtier, who did all he could to drill the Bulgarian Court into something like European order—a task by no means easy. The only information he vouchsafed to me was that his august master, Prince Ferdinand, seldom took off his uniform before three in the morning, up to which hour he was hard at work on the affairs of State. From the Palace to the Skating Rink was only ten minutes' walk. This enclosure was at that time a very popular institution, whither all the rank and fashion of Sofia was wont to resort on winter afternoons. It was merely a piece of low-lying

meadow, which could be flooded very easily so as to renew the ice day by day, and it was lent to the public by M. Stamboloff, to whom the ground belonged.

Dinner at the Union Club completed an introduction to almost everybody worth knowing in the capital, and before I had been forty-eight hours in the town I was free of Sofia.

In another place[1] I have told the story of the Panitza plot and of the many stirring events which succeeded its *dénouement*, but it will still be interesting, more so than any personal gossip, if I reproduce here several conversations I held with M. Stamboloff (as he always spelt and signed his own name), and which I was unable to reproduce in the earlier work, the notes being in England at the time of writing it.

The first of these took place on the 1st of March. These are Stamboloff's words, or as nearly as possible a literal translation of his vigorous phraseology. He invariably spoke to me in French, occasionally interlarding with scraps of Russian, but his letters to myself were always written in the latter language, as his knowledge of the former was colloquial rather than grammatical.

"The story of our trying to hide the participation of Russia in the Panitza plot is absurd. I do not know what more we could do to show our contempt of Russia, and our resolve not to submit to her bullying, than we are doing. We are but a little State, but as long as we subsist independently we form an impenetrable barrier to the Russian advance. My own idea was, long before I came to power, and will be to the end, though I may never see its realisation, a Confederation of the Balkan States. Singly they must inevitably fall, and when they are out of the way Russia can do what she likes with Constantinople. And just as it seems to me that we are necessary to Constantinople, so is she necessary to us. Any other Power in Stamboul—Russia, England, or Germany—would mean the end of the Balkan nationalities. Therefore we are anxious to keep up the bond with

[1] *Life of Stambouloff.*

Turkey, if she will only shake off her hesitation and her lethargy for once, and help us. We want no material help, but merely the moral support of her recognition of our *status*. It has cost us enough to arrive at what we are, and it has cost Turkey nothing. I am urged to declare the Independence at once, and I may tell you that we have appealed to the Porte lately—within the last fortnight—to recognise the Prince. We have received no answer, and I don't suppose we shall get one. It is the eternal shilly-shally of Stamboul which ruins us and them. If, however, the Porte refuses, I do not say that we shall not be forced to declare ourselves free. How would I do it? Not openly and brutally at once, but merely by omitting to pay the tribute. This would open the door to official explanations, and we could, and should say that if the parent threw off its child, the child would decline any longer to recognise the parent. I do not know what the result might be at first, but I am sure that all Bulgaria would be with us. The present situation is so intolerable that it cannot last. Leaving the Government out of the question, the strain upon the Prince is prodigious. It is not fair for him to run all the risks and bear all the burdens of Prince of Bulgaria without being recognised as such. And why, in Heaven's name! should not the Powers agree? It is merely the timidity of Turkey and the rage of Russia which frightens them—both of these hypocritically backing themselves up by quoting the Berlin Treaty. It has been infringed often enough for us not to feel any very delicate scruples as to the letter of it! The spirit of the infraction, as far as Bulgaria is concerned, has been recognised years ago. The fact is that Russia has been mistaken about Bulgaria all through. Her first idea was to get hold of Servia, but, failing there, she hoped to find a tool in a new State which she created for no other purpose, quite forgetting that, when once endowed with political shape and form and substantial power, Bulgaria possessed brains to see that salvation lay, not with Russia, but rather with Turkey. Russia has never yet reconciled herself to the unpalatable truth, and still

with maddest obstinacy continues her endeavours to gag and blindfold us, and all Europe too, into creating out of Bulgaria an advanced post for her armies.

"When we rebel, we have the Treaty of Berlin thrown in our teeth—a treaty which Russia herself was the first to break, and is breaking every day. She still hopes to bring in her candidate" (Prince Leuchtenburg) "by assassination and bribes; but if it ever comes to an issue, there will always be more Bulgarians in favour of a free Bulgaria than of a Russian province.

"We are being freely blamed for not hurrying on the Panitza trial. But why should we put ourselves out to enlighten the public through newspapers which publish utter rubbish by the column every morning? Our clean truth might be considered on a level with the rest of the flights of fancy of their correspondents and editors. All the Cabinets whom it most concerns have had copies of the evidence in our possession, with the names of the Russians implicated, even to that of Domontovitch, the General appointed at St. Petersburg to assume dictatorship if Panitza's plot had succeeded. A good choice, too! The Head of the Chancery of Prince Dondukoff Korsâkoff, and ex-Russian Governor of the Tirnova district! We know him pretty well in Bulgaria!"

Then in reply to some question about previous events —"We had great difficulties in the past; during the Regency and before the election of Prince Ferdinand. All the foreign Diplomatic Agents tried to dissuade me from the step. But my standpoint was that a Regency by its very nature and essence represented a temporary and provisional rule, and it was not under a Regency that Bulgaria could ever be free. It might progress tranquilly enough for a certain number of years, again to fall back entirely under the domination of Turkey or Russia. No! it was necessary for us to have a Prince with a prospect of a dynasty, and it was very difficult to find one. At first we wanted King Charles of Roumania, but he refused. We would even have taken King Milan—not then knowing the true character of the man. Of course, after the

Servian War, it was impossible to put the king of the vanquished over us who had been victorious. And it was a very good thing, after all, that we were saved from him.

"Russia's aim now is to amalgamate Montenegro and Servia, but she will not find it an easy task with Bosnia and Herzegovina between, with Macedonia and Greece on the other side. And even if she succeeded in forming a coalition, with either Greece or Montenegro at the head, do you think that the new State or States would remain any more obedient to Russian commands than we have been? It is ridiculous to suppose such a thing.

"The true Russian policy has always been, is, and ever will be, to disintegrate. Any combination strong enough to feel its own way would never stand Russian dictation. It is some such coalition which I myself should like to see, but at present it appears only in a distant future."

Before quoting any more of Stamboloff's speeches, it may be worth while to interpolate the views of our able Minister, Sir N. Roderick O'Conor, as expressed to me within a day or two of my arrival.

"If Bulgaria were to declare her independence, the Powers would be extremely angry. After all, nobody cares very much for Bulgaria; and Germany in particular, who has to keep a watch on Russia and France, would possibly be roused to a sufficient extent even to go out of her way to punish the Principality. She would say, 'Confound the Bulgars! what do they mean by disturbing the peace of their big neighbours?' and if Russia pressed the Porte to the utmost, as she probably would, Germany could hardly be expected to interfere. It is of course possible that, as in the case of Eastern Roumelia, the Powers, who were very annoyed then, but taken by surprise, might at the last moment intercede in favour of the maintenance of the peace, but it would be rather difficult for them to do so. The Treaty of Berlin??? Of course Russia has broken it, but Russia and Bulgaria are different quantities! It would be hard for the other Powers to restrain the Porte, or to argue against the tremendous pressure Russia would be sure to put on. It *might* be

done, but there would be such a violent vexation against Bulgaria for having provoked an acute crisis, that nobody would interfere purely for Bulgaria's sake. They might for their own, if there was a fair chance of staving off the evil hour. Of course it would be better if the Porte agreed to the recognition of the Prince; but the Porte never either agrees to or dissents from anything in a hurry.

"As for the views of Stamboloff, I think, perhaps, they are purposely exaggerated to you that you may play his game against Holy Russia. It is all very well for him to assert that the position is too strained to last, and quite untenable; but it was just as bad, if not worse, six and nine months ago. Then they said that they did not care a farthing for the very recognition of the Prince for which they are now clamouring. Six months hence they will probably again declare that it is of no consequence, and they can do without it. It is unpleasant, of course, for Prince Ferdinand, but not more so to-day than it was before. I do not believe that they will do anything just yet. It is practically inevitable that the Prince will be recognised, or the independence proclaimed some fine day, if they manage to avoid succumbing to Russia first. But things have to go much further before it comes to the point, and the situation does not seem to me so bad as Stamboloff sometimes, but not always, makes out. I am convinced he is quite easy in his own mind about it."

The next talk with Stamboloff of which the notes are by me, took place on the 4th of March, although it was seldom that a day passed without my seeing him. The subject again was the question of Bulgaria's declaring her independence, and his remarks have not lost all interest yet, since though Prince Ferdinand has now secured his recognition, and his Prime Minister is styled Stoiloff Effendi in the Turkish official press, there is still a great wish and determination amongst the Bulgarians to be free. The difference, however, which was so clearly foreseen by Stamboloff, is that they will probably find that they have to face Russia, and not Turkey, when the moment comes. Indeed, in devoting this chapter

almost entirely to a page of past history, my excuse must be that, as far as Bulgaria is concerned, the situation has not changed very appreciably, and where it has done so, many of the observations reproduced are still pertinent.

"*March 4th.*—When Vulkovitch handed my letter" (requesting the recognition of Prince Ferdinand) "to the Grand Vizier, he was probably rather disturbed, and communicated it to the Ambassadors. That is how it reached Berlin. Up to now, Turkey has taken no notice of the request. But I repeat that if the Porte refuses to recognise the Prince, we will declare our independence. It promised three years ago to recognise the Prince whom we should elect, and it has never done so. I do not fear the consequences of declaring independence as much as those of inaction. If the Sultan himself were to write to me three hundred times, threatening to declare war, I should not believe him. For what would he gain? At the very utmost a re-establishment of the *status quo* of the Treaty of Berlin, *i.e.* a discontented Eastern Roumelia once more, which inevitably would sooner or later again unite with a Bulgaria which would never consent to remain crystallised in its original form. It would re-enter into the forced payment of its tribute of three millions, which it could encash much more easily and regularly by recognising the Prince, and which, furthermore, are of no personal use to the Sultan, as they go straight into the pockets of foreign bondholders. Putting the recognition of the Prince aside, and the case of our having thrown off the suzerainty, would it be worth while for Turkey to make war for the sake nominally of its annual three millions, and with the real result of advancing Russia to within less than a hundred kilometres of Constantinople? And would the other Powers quietly allow her to set the match to the trains of gunpowder which are lying about, for such an object? I will allow, if you like, that the other Powers will be incensed, and leave us to fight it out with Turkey. We should struggle to the bitter end if it came to an invasion, and if we were beaten we should not be much worse off than before. I mean

that we should be in just the predicament which we should have fought to avoid, namely, a Russian occupation, for that would surely follow if the Turks attacked us on the advice of Russia. *Ceteris paribus*, Bulgaria will prefer the risk of war to that of a Russian occupation, the more so as the risk of the occupation is coming within measurable distance, and I am not at all sure that a proclamation of independence would be a certain war, at least not with Turkey. With Servia, yes, more probably. I am, in fact, tolerably sure that as soon as we proclaimed we should be invaded by Servia, urged on by Russia, unless—and it is a large *unless*—Austria threatened Belgrade. You can understand that Austria could hardly look on with indifference at Russian-Servia conquering Bulgaria. As for such a war, if we were left alone to our two selves, it would be a mere promenade for our army, and an announcement of it would be greeted with the utmost enthusiasm by the whole nation, Russophils, Panslavists, and all. Nothing would delight them more than a call to continue the story of Slivnitza and Pirot.

"I believe that Passitch" (then a mere agitator—afterwards Prime Minister in Servia) "is now arranging for some such eventuality at St. Petersburg. But we are well informed, and are keeping our eyes and ears open. We shall not make our decisive move without being well prepared, especially with our army. As for Passitch, I despise the man. He came here in the summer without any official character, not being then even what he now is, President of the Skuptschina, and he proposed to me to act with Servia and divide Macedonia between us. I replied that before dividing other countries we had to consolidate our own: that at present neither did Servia belong to the Serbs, nor Bulgaria to the Bulgars, with any certainty. He stared open-mouthed at this. I went on to say that it might be well enough to make little raids into Macedonia, but simultaneously Russia might be at Varna, and Austria at Belgrade, and that for the present, instead of tearing each other's crests like a pair of

fighting-cocks for the amusement of the Great Powers, or making filibustering expeditions, we had better look nearer home. For the rest, I added, I was a Minister and he was nobody, and I must decline further to discuss the field of general politics. He then asked what message he was to take back to Gruitch" (Servian Premier) "in answer to his proposal, and I replied, 'Give him my best wishes and advice above all things to keep quiet for a while.' The Passitch sort of unaccredited agent is a very dangerous tool for anybody to work or play with. I remember when Kaulbars was here that a message came to me that I was to receive Bogdânoff, and arrange with him for the future. I replied that not only would I refuse to treat with him, but I should decline to have any intercourse whatever with such a vagabond; and I gave orders that he should not be allowed inside the doors of the telegraph office, where I was almost living at that time. The quantity and quality of the messages I then received was extraordinary. I have kept most of them—more than five thousand—by me, and hope some day to write from the story of those days. I had hoped to have a month's holiday this February, but, you see, the Panitza business has upset everything. You must understand that if we now threaten to declare our independence, it is not for the Prince, nor the Government, nor the people: it is on account of the army. We know that there are two or three hundred discontented officers who are always ready to be tools of Russia, to become so, I mean—not trustworthy. They have learned all they know in Russian schools, and have Russian leanings, sympathies, and modes of thought. If we can hold on until the new set who are now studying in France and Belgium, and elsewhere, are fit to come in, the danger will be lessened. But I am afraid. It is a shame that officers forget their oaths, their fealty, and their patriotism; but they do, and it is useless to ignore it. Prince Alexander fell through shutting his eyes to the possibility of treason. Two months before his abdication he told me that he feared revolt amongst the populations of Roumelia. I

answered that there was no fear from the people, but that it was the army which threatened. He was furious, and kept repeating that 'his children,' always his children, 'could never be untrue!' Afterwards when I was driving in his carriage on his last journey out of Bulgaria I reminded him of what we had said. 'Ah, yes!' he sighed, 'you were right: but I should never have believed it possible.'

"I well remember the day of the battle of Slivnitza. It was glorious weather, sunshine like to-day. I came into Sofia with Major von Hühn, and as we drew near we could hear the cannon so plainly that we thought the Serbs must have found some other way round. It must have been some peculiar echo from the Vitosh which I had never heard before or since. I drove back to the field almost immediately, but Tsanoff" (then Minister for Foreign Affairs) "went to the Russian Agency and asked what was to be done. He thought, as everybody did, that the Servian army was marching on Sofia. Koyander shrugged his shoulders and said, 'I will undertake to stop the Serbs at the very gates if the Ministry will sign the deposition of the Prince.' But Tsanoff went away in a rage. Soon after he received my telegram saying we were victorious along the whole line. He took it to the Russian Legation just as the whole party, including two ladies, were sitting down to tea. 'Congratulate us,' he cried; 'we have won the day!' 'Impossible! what a pity!' was the way the Russians received the news."[1]

Another Conversation on April 1st.

"The first thing I heard on my return from Philippopolis was that a letter from Zankoff to the Heads of

[1] Tsanoff himself confirmed the foregoing anecdote to me. He further related how intense was the excitement at Sofia. He himself went to the telegraph office and climbed the tower, from which the smoke of the battle could be seen. But no message came. At length he told the chief clerk that unless he managed to give him news in one sense or another within half an hour he should be dismissed. Then came Stamboloff's wire.

Parties had been found amongst Kissimoff's papers. Kissimoff was the Chancellor of the Red Cross. We had long known that he was a pillar of the Zankoffists, and had had him watched. Lately we dismissed him. As he was leaving he took a bundle of papers out of his breast coat pocket, and one fell on the floor. His successor waited till Kissimoff had shut the door, and then picked it up. Afterwards when Kissimoff came back to look for it, he said he had seen nothing. The document was dated St. Petersburg, ——— 1889. The day and month were to be filled in on signature by the 'Heads.' I don't know which 'Heads' were meant exactly. We have plenty of Heads here. I am Head of the Liberals, and there is Karaveloff, Radoslâvoff, Natchevitch, and others. The document was in the handwriting of Ludskânoff" (Zankoff's son-in-law), "which is very well known to every official here. It was already signed by Zankoff, who thus bound himself in advance. It contained a solemn pledge all to work together without distinction of party, firstly, for the expulsion of Prince Ferdinand ; secondly, for the reconciliation with Russia. I myself have a letter from Zankoff in the same sense written from Belgrade last November. I shall probably produce it with the rest at the trial, and indict Zankoff together with Panitza, and judge him by default. It is curious how the old man Kissimoff could keep such a compromising letter when his son had been arrested only four or five days previously. I recollect when I was an exile in Roumania, there was a notorious bandit there too who had committed numberless murders. He always carried about with him in a back trouser pocket a poignard with which he had killed fourteen people. I asked him once what was his object in doing so, as some day it would serve as evidence against him. He replied that it was of no further use to him, it was true, but that it brought him good luck. Just so Ozûnoff the other day had a heap of Russian correspondence neatly tied up and docketed. When interrogated as to how he could be such a fool, he answered that he had thought

perhaps when the Russians came here the papers might be useful as proving his previous zeal. It is remarkable how often pure accident serves us better than our most strenuous and intelligent efforts. People credit me with having a tremendous staff of secret police everywhere, on which I spend large sums. It is very far from being the case, and almost all my information reaches me casually, and so to speak by accident.

"Ah! If I only had Zankoff here instead of Panitza! Panitza's confession is interesting in a way, but I don't believe all of it, especially since he accuses Kissoff, who revealed the plot. That may be true and may not; in any case, Kissoff having given evidence cannot be prosecuted; but I fancy it is merely a piece of spite on the part of Panitza, and if so it taints his whole confession.

"A war with Servia would be very popular. When Milan came to the throne he tried to make the Bulgarians and Servians friends, and we too did all we could. Even now I and my party always try to tone down the bitterness of the enmity which now exists, but it is no good; and there is no denying that the Bulgars are still very incensed against the Serbs. You know the saying 'There is no enemy like an old friend,' and that seems to be our case. We have enough Krinka rifles and ammunition for two years' perpetual fighting. The rifles may not be as good as the Servian, but we know that our men are better. It is not the rifle so much as the man who pulls the trigger. If I were to spend a hundred pounds on a gun, and Count Starzensky" (Secretary of the Austrian Legation, and a very fine shot) "were to buy one for sixty francs, and we were to go out together, I know which would kill farthest and oftenest."

I will only give one more extract from my notebook of conversations, dated 2nd June, when I found Stamboloff in a state of great excitement after the sentences on Panitza and his accomplices had been given. I went straight from the Court-House to the Premier, who burst out—

"I am furious at the result of the court-martial, simply furious! I myself went over all the papers and know the *dossier* pretty well by heart, better than any of the lawyers or members. If the men had done nothing I should not have sent them for trial. And then the Procureur coolly gets up and withdraws the charges against half of them! It is not his business to withdraw charges forsooth! He has an act of indictment given into his hands by the Ministers for him to press. He has no authority to withdraw the accusation his Minister has made. But I shall dismiss him from his post" (which he did). "As for the members of the Court, I had hoped that they would do their duty better. They have before them a pack of traitors who positively avow that they intended to betray their oath and dethrone their Prince, and the Court only finds the ringleader guilty for death, and adds a recommendation to mercy! Why, the whole five or six" (Panitza, Arnaoudoff, Kalubkoff, and the two Rizoffs were meant) "ought to have been condemned to death, and the rest to fifteen years! Fancy letting off men like Rizoff and Kissimoff! Thank you! A fig for being Premier in a country where you cannot reckon upon the army to serve you faithfully! It is impossible to govern under such circumstances! Pooh! Petroff and Sontcheff" (members of the court-martial like the others next mentioned) "were not equal to the occasion, only Drandareffsky and Andréeff. As for Marinoff—'*figure de femme, et cœur de fille!*' He wept and drivelled and turned the others, talking about Panitza's services and wife and children! But I have services and a family too! Am I for that reason to try and kill my superiors, to risk throwing my country into a civil war, or into the clutches of a Power like Russia; and then, when I am found out just in time to stop me, to get up and say that I think I was quite right, but that, if you want to punish me, you must remember my services and my wife? As for the acquitted, I shall expel them all at once from Bulgaria" (they were deported next morning). "It is bad enough to see them acquitted without leaving them

to propagate the opinions they expressed in Court. Of course if we wanted to find a *vice de forme* it would not be difficult. Do you think that a Court which could return such a ridiculous verdict could be capable of writing it out legally? Pah! But how do I know that another one would be better? I tell you my confidence is altogether shaken. The Court was left too much alone because we trusted them too much. I never went near them, nor saw one of them. But I believe Stransky" (Minister for Foreign Affairs), "who has a weakness for Panitza, influenced them considerably. Has he ever said anything to you about it? Well, I know he used to talk a good deal with the members, and Markoff" (the Procureur-Général), "through Vulnâroff, his brother-in-law, was in relations with the Panitza crew. They ought to have sentenced the lot to death, and left the Prince to decide. His Highness could then have commuted in the case of Kalubkoff, on the ground that he at least was working for his country" (he was a Russian), "and so we could have scored off Russia."

Since the assassination of Stamboloff, Bulgaria has gradually been drawn more and more within the meshes of the Russian net, which all his energies and efforts were directed to breaking. In order to secure his recognition, which Stamboloff would, if he had been left in power, have tried to obtain by the threat of proclaiming the independence, Prince Ferdinand baptized his son in the Orthodox faith, accepted Russian Ministers resident once more at Sofia, brought back the officers who had kidnapped Alexander, and put himself virtually under Russian protection. At the same time he has never ceased his protestations of loyalty and devotion to the Sultan, though in all questions between Bulgaria and the Porte it is now solely upon Russian backing that the vassal State relies. Since, at the moment of writing, there seems a fair prospect of very radical changes before very long throughout the Turkish Empire, it would be idle to analyse the present position of Bulgaria in comparison with its past, or to weigh the chances of the future which the two different

policies pursued by Stamboloff and his successor might have produced and may now result in.

Besides the commanding personality of Stamboloff himself, there were many other personages who had played a considerable rôle in the past history of Bulgaria, and whose acquaintance and conversation were both interesting and instructive.

M. Tsanoff has already been mentioned. He had been Minister for Foreign Affairs during several critical moments, but had then quite retired into private life. When I called upon him he was digging in the garden in his shirt sleeves in true Bulgarian simplicity. He told me that for several days before Servia declared war he had held long conversations by telegraph with Prince Alexander, and had repeatedly warned him to be prepared. The Prince always declared that it was a mere *blague*, and that his good friend Milan would never think of attacking him. It had invariably been the fault of Alexander of Battenberg's character that he placed too implicit confidence in those whom he believed to be his friends. Tsanoff stated that at the time of the Eastern Roumelian revolt Sir Frank Lascelles had been the truest friend of Bulgaria. To Alexander he had always behaved almost like a brother. He remarked that Stamboloff and Givkoff were the only two civilians who had received the *Croix de Bravoure.* It was really contrary to the Bulgarian Constitution for any Bulgarian to wear orders, but the usage was creeping in.

Another gentleman with whom I often talked was M. Gueshof, Minister of Finance. He was a mild, rather nervous-mannered man, and did not approve of Stamboloff's arbitrary methods. "You might just as well proclaim martial law at once," he said, "as to exercise it, as it is virtually in force just now. Nothing like a public or even a private meeting is allowed, all newspaper discussion or comment unfavourable to the Government is suppressed, and private letters are regularly opened. For instance, there is the case of Yovtcheff, who published in the *Rodolubetz* a species of acrostic verse, the initial

letters of each line spelling 'Stamboloff is a tyrant who extinguishes all liberty.' He was summoned to the third Uchastuk" (police station), "where a captain, called Kiroff, asked him who was the author of the acrostic, and how he dared to publish such a thing in his paper. He then hit him several blows in the face, and told him with a curse to sit down, whilst some conversation went on through the telephone. A friend of Yovtcheff's who happened to be in the Headquarter Office heard the question put through the machine, 'Has Yovtcheff any traces of the blows on his face?' 'No.' 'Then turn him out of the Uchastuk.' He also told me that when Basmadjieff, the Prefect of Police, had heard of how Stamboloff had gone himself to arrest Panitza at midnight in his bed, he had exclaimed, 'What a chance thrown away! Why on earth did not Madame Panitza, who had a revolver under her pillow, shoot him down as he broke into the room at that hour? She could never have been punished had she done so!'"

Karaveloff and Zankoff were others whom I met, the latter, however, not in Bulgaria until after the tragic end of his enemy.

Of Prince Ferdinand I saw very little. Probably on account of my intimacy, not only with Stamboloff, whom he had already begun to fear and dislike, though leaning entirely upon him, but with a great many others of all parties, many of whom were openly hostile to the Coburger, I was never a *persona grata* at the Palace, as were some of my colleagues. Of course I paid an official visit, and was received with cool and rather cynical courtesy in one of the smaller rooms of the Palace. One of the Prince's main hobbies was ornithology, and two white-headed eagles, stuffed, adorned either side of the mantelshelf with a great horned owl between.[1] There were various other specimens about, besides a cage full of small birds,

[1] Later on I myself possessed one of these fine birds, who, however, grew so ferocious that I presented him to the Prince for his zoological gardens. At that time I believe it was the second specimen, but a numerous progeny has now sprung up from the original pair, as anybody can see by a visit to the large cage full of them.

something like Cirl Buntings, but which His Highness said were grand songsters. There were also some meagre little bob-tailed parrots, which were rather a source of pride from having been bred in his own aviary at Coburg, from whence he had also imported some good *dachshunds*.

Prince Ferdinand is altogether a Bourbon in appearance, having inherited their type through his mother, the Princess Clementine. He has a tall commanding figure, but is not graceful in his movements on foot, and sits a horse execrably. His voice is harsh and disagreeable, but he is witty in conversation and can make himself agreeable enough when he chooses. Though he has been at pains to learn Bulgarian, which he speaks well, he has never amalgamated in any way with his people of adoption, and the Bulgarians in his Court are expected to conform entirely to his ideas. The Court is consequently not at all a Bulgarian one, but a species of hybrid Franco-German establishment. Even on my first visit, as the subject happened to crop up of the Serbs trying to suborn Bulgarian emigrants, he remarked with an acid smile, "Ah, oui, mes *fidèles* sujets!" As, however, he has never troubled himself much to disguise his dislike, not to say contempt, for the people from whom he accepted his crown, he can scarcely grumble at their want of devotion to his person. In passing from Roumania one cannot fail to be struck with the difference in the Palaces. The Bucharest Court is just as national as if King Charles had been born there, and the villegiatura at Sinaia brings the royal family into daily and almost familiar contact with the public. But both at Sofia and Alexandrovo the Bulgarian Court is like a little oasis—a minute, reserved enclosure from which all trespassers are rigorously excluded.

Besides his taste for birds, Prince Ferdinand affected a certain love for sport; but this was, I fancy, more put on than genuine. I have mentioned Count Starzensky already as one of the best sportsmen I have ever met. This gentleman was convinced that there must be capercaillie in Bulgaria, and would not rest until he had discovered some of their resorts at Samakov and Petrokhan.

His find created a certain sensation, and as the sport of stalking these birds in the early spring is a very fashionable one, the Prince occasionally went with the Count on these excursions. He also gave a drive for chamois on the Rilo Mountain, where the existence of this game was likewise revealed by Starzensky; but I believe the result of the drive was that all the chamois avoided the guns and charged helter-skelter through a *posse* of valets and footmen who were taking their ease a mile or two off. As a matter of fact, Bulgaria is full of game in parts, and any really sporting Prince might easily have rented or purchased some fine shootings. The only attempt, however, made in this direction was the issue of an order that the pheasants at Yamboli were reserved for the royal guns. As, in the first place, the land did not belong to the Prince; and secondly, as it was very systematically poached by the villagers, to whom it really did appertain, I myself went thither once with the intention of bagging a few. Orders were at once sent to stop me, but I was inclined to disregard them and see what the result could have been had I not been dissuaded by a personal appeal from some friends who did not wish to have such a question raised. I daresay that this incident also did not contribute towards advancing me in Palace favour. At the same time one had very little need for this boon in order to enjoy life capitally even in those troublous times.

One of the pleasantest trips we made was a picnic out to the Monastery of Rilo, which lies off one of the spurs of the Rhodope, and is a regular stock attraction for visitors who have sufficient time at their disposal. Our party consisted of Sir N. R. O'Conor, with his wife; Baron and Baroness Wangenheim, the German Representative; M. Kaufmann, the real, though uncrowned, Prince of Sofia; Count Starzensky, and myself. We rode out by way of Samakov, where we passed the night, and reached the monastery the following afternoon.

A thousand years ago a boy of fourteen left his native village of Skrino and set out in search of a convenient

place wherein to practise the strict asceticism necessary for the salvation of the elect. After wandering over many a mountain, forest, and plain, he discovered a hollow tree on the slopes of Mount Rilo, and later on a hollow rock, where he established himself like a coney. Gradually the fame of the hermit spread abroad, and emulous disciples joined him, till they formed a little colony, and began building huts for themselves and a rude chapel for their worship. The youth was Sveti Jovan Rilski, and the chapel was the predecessor of the great Monastery of Rilo, which occupies the same position in Bulgaria as Mont St. Michel in Normandy, or La Grande Chartreuse in Dauphiné.

The Rilo range rises almost in the centre of the Balkan Peninsula, half-way between the Danube and the Ægean. It is shaped like a monster pyramid of nature, measuring from east to west fifty kilometres, and thirty from north to south. The northern face is abrupt and steep, and clothed with glorious virgin forests, where the sound of the axe will never be heard, for transport is impossible. Eastwards the Rila joins the Rhodope, and to the south the Perin Planina. Its topmost peak is 2930 metres above the sea, only a few feet lower than Olympus. The fauna and flora and the geological formation remind one of the Carpathians; and, like them, the Rila is dotted with small lakes, which the peasants call "eyes of the sea." The forests reach up six thousand feet, and, above them, bare crags are the home of the chamois. The monastery lies high on the mountain slope, and in the gorge below foams the Rilska Réka, a delicious crystal stream, whose trout furnish the staple food of the monks, and whose icy water is sweeter than wine. It has the appearance, from the outside, of a baronial fortress, with crenelated walls and loopholes, and massive iron gates, which are closed half an hour after sunset, to open only at next dawn. The moment the threshold is crossed, however, one is face to face with the Church of Our Lady, almost a counterpart of that of the Monastery of Khilandâr at Mount Athos, with a red

and white stone façade and six silvered cupolas. It stands in the centre of an immense court, round which is built the monastery proper, three storeys high. Seventy-six massive stone pillars support the balconies of the guest chambers, and also of the monks, three hundred in number. Some of these rooms are very spacious, and fairly well furnished with carpets, divans, and cushions. A niche contains water and a basin and ewer, and wardrobes, *à la Turque*, are let into the walls. Each of the larger rooms could easily accommodate half a dozen persons, and it would not be difficult to billet a whole regiment in the vast building. The walls of the church are entirely covered with frescoes representing various Bible scenes—the Day of Judgment, Lazarus and Dives, and the punishments reserved for each particular kind of sin. These, as well as the interior paintings, are solely the work of Macedonian and Bulgarian artists, whose special forte is the delineation of devils. The variety of form and expression to be found in these mural decorations is delightful, and the face of the principal fiend, in one of these frescoes, when a soul escapes him, is a perfect study in demonology. This particular painting is curious in the extreme. In the centre is a huge pair of scales, before which stands, with folded hands, the soul. On one side is the heavenly host, armed with long eel-spears, and on the other the devils. The sins resemble rolls of tobacco, and are piled on to the balance by an assiduous horned demon. The scale, however, refuses to turn, and the soul is saved, several angels keeping off devils laden with sins at the point of the pitchfork. Inside there is not a square inch uncovered with decoration, and the Iconostasis is a blaze of gold, enamel, and precious stones. To the right lies the body of St. Jovan, which is reverently uncovered before visitors. It is enveloped in rich broideries and silver plates, only a mummied hand showing for the kiss of the faithful, and at the feet is placed a dish to receive their offerings. In a vault at the south-west corner of the cloisters is the library and chamber of relics. Neither

of these, however, comes up to expectations, the library being especially poor. The most interesting document by far is the Firman given by the last King of the Bulgars, "*the faithful servant of God, Jovan Shishman, King and Autocrat of all the Bulgars and Greeks.*" It is nearly two yards long, written on parchment in Bulgarian, and signed with a large gold seal the size of a crown piece. It is dated 1379, and confirms all donations made by his predecessors, with a minute description of the properties and rights of the monastery. There are one or two fine old manuscript Bibles in Cyrillian characters, massively bound in heavy silver covers of excellent workmanship, with the names of the artists and inscriptions inserted in the general design. One of these states that it was completed "in the year 7033 of the Creation," and by a rapid calculation the Abbot interprets this to make it three hundred and sixty-five years old. The key to this chronology is in fixing the birth of Christ at 5508 of the Creation, and it appears to be generally used in Slovene manuscripts. Another Bible bears on one cover the following:—"*Remember in your holy prayers brother Mathéa, the goldsmith of Sofia, who laboured to carve this Gospel together with the monk Euthymia, and helped by the first monk Kallista in the year* 1577." There are crucifixes of every imaginable shape and material, and as a reliquary an embossed silver casket with the bones of seven saints. In the Abbot's room is the crucifix presented by Prince Alexander of Battenberg, a very beautiful specimen of Russian handicraft, set round with large amethysts, and a larger one, given last year by Prince Ferdinand. The Abbot, or Hegumen, was a jovial gentleman of forty-five, who looked ten years younger, and did the honours of coffee, cigarettes, and *raki* with genial good-humour. He is appointed by ballot for three years, and Father Joseph seemed likely to have a second tenure of office, so popular had he made himself. There are two visitors' books—one for simple inscription, and the other for noting the donations made by the parting guests. Owing to stories spread of brigandage, only one

party had been to Rilo since the summer before; but, as a matter of fact, there is very little to fear. In August the great Festival of St. Jovan is held, and pilgrims flock from every corner of the peninsula to the monastery in their thousands. This temporary excitement, however, only lasts a few days, and the Rilo soon returns to its normal state of isolated tranquillity. The hospitality of the monastery is of a primitive kind, and the fare provided somewhat monotonous, so that it is as well to take provisions both of meat and wine. The monks are not supposed to touch meat within the walls, nor outside them, on Wednesdays and Fridays. On these fast days nothing prepared with milk or butter even is allowed, and trout, with lentil soup and bread, forms the perpetual *menu*. The kitchen is a dark and cavernous den, and the fire is made by lighting the trunk of a fir-tree, which burns up fiercely under the pots, and is pushed forward by degrees as it consumes away. Most of the brethren cook for themselves, but two *chefs* are on duty for serving travellers, assisted by a few small boys to wait. Altogether there are thirty children at school, with three teachers. They are obliged in every way to conform to the usual monastic discipline, and to attend all the chapel services. The daily service in the large church takes place at two in the morning, and the monks are roused from their slumbers by the sound of a wooden gong,—a plank suspended by two cords,—which rings weirdly through the night. Close to the church rises an old dilapidated tower, on to which a belfry has been built about half-way up. The tower has the following inscription:—"*Under the rule of the all-powerful Prince Stefan Dushân Chrylé built the Tower with much labour to the glory of St. Jovan and the holy Virgin.* 1335." The belfry is dated 1844, and was a gift of the Servian Prince Milosh. Throughout the monastery the national stamp is everywhere evident, in contradistinction to the Greek spirit which pervades so many of these establishments. Rilo is essentially Bulgarian, and a fitting monument of the tenacity of the race.

One of the reasons for Starzensky's and my own participation in this excursion was the hope of being able to find chamois. No sooner had we arrived than we sent for everybody who was reputed to know anything about hunting, and received enough information to warrant a belief that there most certainly were goats of some species amongst the summits. Accordingly we agreed to start in pursuit of them, and persuaded two young peasants to accompany us. We had not ascended very far, however, when a violent storm burst, and continued with such violence and pertinacity that I elected to return. It was in July, and we had scarcely bargained for anything of the sort. Personally, I am not fond of climbing, and only undertake an ascent under strong inducements, and when I can do so more or less under favourable conditions. Starzensky, who was very keen after his chamois, on the contrary, decided to go on, and so we parted.

Next morning the whole of the mountain was hidden in mist and rain whilst it was warm and bright below, and about eleven the boy came down asking for some cigarettes and a box of sardines to be sent up to the Count. It appeared that the storm had increased all the afternoon with blinding snow and hail, till the pair of hunters were brought up on a narrow ledge afraid either to go on or go back. It was impossible also to make a fire, and they spent most of the night standing with their backs against the rock.

Next, or the third, afternoon the boy came down again, saying that Starzensky was following with the chamois, which he had finally succeeded in spying, stalking, bowling over, and bringing in on his back. It was certainly a well-earned pair of horns, which I did not grudge my more energetic fellow-sportsman.

Meanwhile I had been amusing myself with the trout. Having no implements, I fashioned a hook out of a hair-pin lent by one of the ladies, and hard work it was to reduce it to the requisite fineness. Even after all it had no barb. Some shredded silk did well enough to tie it on to some hairs from the tail of my nag. My first essays were, however, far from successful, and I began to think

the jovial abbot, Father Joseph, had been making fun of me when he had said I might easily catch a couple of score. He too had a good laugh at my empty, or nearly empty, creel, but said that he would himself accompany me on the morrow and teach me how to fish. The idea of being given a lesson in trout-fishing by a Bulgarian priest rather tickled my fancy, but the Padre was as good as his word.

In the morning after matins the worthy man tucked up his skirts conveniently in his girdle and invited me to start. On reaching a large meadow he began catching grasshoppers of a peculiar kind, small and green, of which he accumulated a store, and then commenced operations, working all the time down stream. Hardly had he made his cast, if cast it could be called, before he deposited his first trout ten yards behind him on the turf. There was no playing them with an unbarbed hook and a hazel rod only about eight feet long cut out of the thicket. After he had secured about a dozen he trotted back to the monastery. When I appeared later with five dozen more the rest of the party would not believe that they had been fairly caught, Kaufmann being especially sceptical. In the evening I had another turn, and as they were rising like sharks I was almost certain of one behind every stone. M. Kaufmann seeing me in the distance strolled up with a chaffing remark, to which I replied that I would name three stones from each of which I would then and there produce a fish in as many minutes. A bet was made, which was never difficult with my unbeliever, whose astonishment was perfectly ludicrous as he saw the trout flying over his head one after another. I met him a few months ago, and we had another laugh over the scene, which he vows he will never forget to the day of his death.

I cannot leave Bulgaria without noticing another short and enjoyable excursion, in company this time with my colleague of the *Times*, Mr. J. Bourchier. It came about in this wise. One afternoon whilst taking a constitutional on the Orkhanieh road I met a peasant driving a cart which contained a stag and a couple of capercaillie.

Inquiring whence he came, and whether there was much more of such game in his neighbourhood, he named the village of Keuprishtitza, and declared that stag, boar, and roedeer abounded. He also said that he did not mind taking me there if I chose to run the risk of being captured by brigands. This part of the question was settled by Stamboloff giving me a letter to one of the brigand chiefs, and further recommending me, through the peasant Rashko, to the headman of the place, and holding him responsible. Bourchier, though not a very enthusiastic sportsman, was taken with the idea of exploring a piece of the country not much known, and we started in a "paëtone," as the Bulgarians call the victorias which ply for hire, with our belongings mostly slung behind on the springs. About one o'clock we reached Tashkesser, and baited at an inn called the "Doves," in spite of the rival attractions of another hostelry and its invitation written up in charcoal over the door, "This is a khan. Walk in, ladies and gentlemen." During the rest of the afternoon we rolled lazily on our way, reaching Pirdrop at about eight in the evening. Here we bought a quarter of lamb, and this, together with spring onions, sardines, and snails, made a very fine dinner.

Profiting by many previous experiences, I made my sleeping arrangements by having a big mat spread in the very middle of the courtyard in the open, and then covering it a foot or so deep in sweet hay, could lie down without fear of those who murder sleep, but who even in a room are rather defeated by loose straw or hay. They can, however, and do, surmount this difficulty generally by dropping accurately from the ceiling; but with the sky above I was safe. Bourchier preferred a lordly chamber, for that night only, the lesson being sufficient. Harnessing our four steeds at eight next morning, we pushed on, and about eleven began a very steep climb up the D'lboko Dereh, half-way between Pirdrop and our destination. Near the top we were met by Rashko's son and another youth, who presented us with a bouquet each of wild geranium, hyacinth, and other flowers. Finally we

reached Keuprishtitza soon after two o'clock, and being somewhat sore from the jolting, lay down for a siesta in the house of the headman. This old fellow had had a family of twelve, but only five girls and one boy were left at home. Two of these, maidens about sixteen, served us at table and assisted us at our ablutions, wanting to save us the trouble even of washing our own faces. On the walls hung four different kinds of rifles, plus an old single-barrelled Russian gun, several hunting-knives, and various trophies of the chase—horns, boars' tusks, etc. In the evening the most respectable of the village community paid us visits, amongst them being a doctor who had spent some time on service in Yemen, from whence he had brought an interesting collection of photographs of the Turkish garrisons and of the holy places. There was also another youth, who spoke Arabic and French well, like the doctor, a surprising circumstance in such an out-of-the-way spot.

After putting ourselves in communication with the brigand hunters through an ancient old scamp of at least eighty, we agreed to meet next morning outside the village, which some of their number declined to enter ; and soon after eight we mounted two shaggy ponies, with a third to carry some belongings, and, escorted by a dozen wild-looking peasants all armed to the teeth, struck away up the face of the mountain, which was thickly wooded, with beautiful grass glades here and there. By noon we were already high up, and made a first beat. As it was not the season for deer, we did not care so much to shoot any as to convince ourselves of their existence, and this was quickly manifest. The manner of the driving was primitive, but considering the smallness of our numbers it was very well done, and the game was generally sent well forward, though seldom within shot of either Bourchier or myself. In the second drive there were three chances missed at roedeer, and capercaillie were seen. Altogether we must have seen fourteen or fifteen stags and several roe and boar, but nothing was killed. We had a frugal meal at sunset, and almost directly after wrapped ourselves

in our rugs and slept out. I rose at about four next morning to try and stalk a capercaillie, but failed to score ; and as the night had been cold, everybody was quite ready to begin walking again soon after six.

On the third day we were taken back to the village, and our rather disreputable friends being now quite reassured as to the honesty of our intentions, all assembled outside our host's house to bid us good-bye. Old Netko was touchingly drunk, and could hardly speak above a whisper to say he was "*so* happy," and we drove off amidst a shower of "Sbogoms" repeated all through the village, accompanied with frequent libations of wine brought out by the keepers of every khan along the route. We did a little fishing on our way back, and we were once more in Sofia within the week, the total expenses for this amusing little trip having certainly not amounted to more than fifteen shillings a day, including our carriage and four, and presents and tips to all our entertainers and brigand beaters.

CHAPTER X

ON leaving Bulgaria I took up the duties of *Standard* correspondent at St. Petersburg. An idea prevails amongst many, if not most, of my countrymen that Russia is a semi-barbarous land inhabited by rather ferocious savages. I can only say from my own experiences that no place in which I have ever resided has left pleasanter remembrances behind it. My difficulty in writing this chapter is to choose from amongst them all. Undoubtedly first and foremost in my case are the recollections of sport of various kinds, and as hitherto only the briefest allusions have been made to a subject which always interests English readers, perhaps a sketch of what a stranger can find in Russia may amuse.

All round St. Petersburg shooting and fishing rights are hired by so-called clubs, the only exceptions being the Imperial preserves. These clubs are generally open to any well-introduced candidate, and it was not long before I became a member of one of the oldest of them—that of "Trubnikoff Bor," situated about seventy miles down the Moscow line. We had nominally about thirty or forty members, but not more than a dozen or so used their rights with any regularity. Our ground covered at that time about 54,000 *desiateens* or 150,000 acres, almost the whole of it being forest and moss bog. It was leased in part from the family of Prince Bagration Mukhransky, whose country house stood over against our shooting-box, and in part from the villagers, who possess all sporting privileges over their respective districts.

Our own quarters consisted in a substantially built log house with seven or eight bedrooms, in which resided our head keeper, a Russian-German from the Baltic provinces, with his wife and family. Old Stutzer was a

well-known character for miles round, and he had been so long in his position that he was considered as part and parcel of the club. Besides being a first-class tracker and versed in every branch of woodcraft, he had managed to get all his under-keepers and beaters into order, and to keep them well in hand,—no easy task,—and the only fault to be found with him was that he sometimes tried (and succeeded) to have his own obstinate way with his superiors as well as with his subordinates. Amongst his other accomplishments he was an excellent dog-breaker, and I have seldom, if ever, seen setters and pointers to come up to those over which I used to shoot at Trubnikoff.

One of the great advantages of Russia to the passionate sportsman is that there is hardly a month in which he cannot be out either in wood or marsh. In January and February, of course, the snow is still very thick, and there is no feather to be had unless by early morning gunning after blackcock and capercaillie as they sit on the tops of the pines. But every *porosha*, or fresh fall of snow, gives a chance for a run after hares, foxes, lynx, or wolves. The hare can be easily tracked and followed up to the bush where he is lying, on snowshoes, but the others have to be "ringed" and "flagged." The system of flagging was a revelation to me, and is worth a brief description. The spoor of any game is followed in the usual way until the animal is located within a certain piece of forest, say a mile in circumference. This is very quickly done by a good tracker, who seems to know instinctively where a wolf, fox, elk, or any other creature is likely to lie, and how near he can "cut" his ring. The guns or gun are then placed down wind, and men told off to this work, and practised at it, begin "flagging" the ring. Beginning at about thirty yards on either side of the gun or gunning line, they run round the ring unrolling a long cord, on which are tied strips of coloured cloth at intervals of about six feet. The cord is kept at the height required by being hitched on to a bush or twig from time to time. It should always hang at about the running level of the head of the quarry, and as free as possible, so

that the flags may flutter in the wind. Two or three quick "flaggers" on snowshoes will fix a mile of cord in less than half an hour. The effect of these flags is extraordinary, for there is no animal which will cross them in cold blood, or which will not generally prefer even to break back through the beaters rather than force the cord. The usual system is when the ring is complete for a crowd of beaters to encircle the far side of it opposite the guns and make as much noise as they can. If the beast refuses to come out, they then enter and drive up to the shooting line. I am convinced, however, that this is a mistake, especially with elk, which, when terrified, huddle together, and then gallop back through the beaters. A much better system, which I sometimes managed to induce the keepers to adopt, was for one or two of them to enter the ring and move about whistling and clapping their hands, but making very little disturbance. It is quite sufficient for any wild animal to know that a man is in his vicinity for him to try at once and put as great a distance as possible between himself and his enemy, and the beating of tom-toms and petroleum cans and firing of pistols is quite superfluous. An examination of the ring afterwards is always instructive, and it will generally be seen that the animal on being roused has soon run up to within sight or smell of the flags, when he has turned and repeated the same tactics, until he finally has come out upon the unflagged space where the guns were posted. It is marvellous with what ease and certainty an expert tracker and woodcraftsman will bring out his game even to one single gun, with the help of a mile of flags. On the few occasions on which I have seen the flags "violated" it has always been owing either to undue noise and pressing by the beaters, or close pursuit by dogs.

It was not long before I was invited to join in a bear hunt. Having never hitherto killed anything large, I was only too eager to accept, in spite of the somewhat onerous conditions which usually attach to this branch of sport. The custom is for the peasants to seek out the winter lairs of the bears, and having made sure, or believing they have done so, to come into St. Petersburg and offer their bear for

sale. This sounds rather cold-blooded and comical, but the bargain after all is entirely in favour of the peasants and the bear. According to the size of the footprints and the width of stride the weight is guessed, and a contract is made, usually at the rate of about a sovereign a *pood* of 38 lbs. Besides the price of the bear itself, there will be about four or five pounds for the beaters and trackers, and what with sledges and lodging, etc., a bear of twelve *poods* will cost nearer eighteen than fifteen pounds. The sellers undertake to drive the bear out within shooting distance of the guns, and as it is always in deep snow, there can never be any dispute over this question. If the buyer misses he has to pay as if he had killed—in fact, he bets fifteen pounds or so to nothing that he drops the bear; for unless he does there is very little chance of his ever seeing it again. Even if the bear is wounded and has not gone far, the peasants will, unless your own keeper is with you, conceal his whereabouts in the hope of being able to resell him again to somebody else. There was, however, little danger of any tricks being played on my first bear hunt, as my companion was an old hand, and we were, moreover, accompanied by the redoubtable Stutzer. The bear was supposed to weigh about ten *poods*, and his *berloga*, or lair, was at a distance of about two hundred versts altogether from St. Petersburg My host, M. Gaïus, undertook all arrangements, and I found myself successively deposited in trains, sledges, and cottages, until at length we were in the forest. Here arose a question, as mine host was imperative as to the necessity of my having a keeper or other experienced local sportsman standing behind me with my second rifle. This was quite contrary to my ideas, and I refused to admit of it. M. Gaïus himself had once been rather severely mauled by a bear, which, had it not been already mortally wounded and almost dead before it reached the shooter, would certainly have killed him. Since then he always had somebody to stand on his "number" with him when after bears, and perhaps this may have accounted for his anxiety regarding me, his guest. I had a shrewd fancy,

however, that it was rather from a fear that I should let the bear off, and that we should have our pains for nothing, that such solicitude was shown. Be that as it may, I declared that I would not take any further part in the business unless I was left absolutely alone; and seeing that it was useless to insist, he yielded the point, and we took up our places in a very thick piece of wood about forty paces apart, the flags beginning some twenty paces to my right. The actual *berloga* was on this occasion exactly known, which it is not always, and the ring was cut down very small, being not probably more than four or five hundred yards round. I confess I had very little hopes of killing, partly owing to a legend that had grown around M. Gaïus that it was always he who was favoured by fortune, and partly because it seemed to me that unless the bear came straight out upon me I should not get a chance at him, so thick was the cover and the snow. It was a glorious morning, with the thermometer well below zero Fahrenheit; but though the drive in the sledge had been cold, it was quite comfortable once we were within shelter. The shouting had hardly been in progress five minutes when I heard the bushes crackling to my front, but scarcely loud enough, as it seemed to me, to herald the expected bear. In another moment, though, a small whirlwind of snow appeared round a large dark body, which went bowling rapidly past at about twenty paces inside the wood. In another moment he would have been out of the ring just at the spot where the flags began, and I saw that it was then or never. With that sort of happy instinct which every shooter knows, although I really could not distinguish any part of him, I aimed at his shoulder, and had the satisfaction of seeing him collapse instantly. As, however, he lay on his side savagely clawing and tearing the young trees within reach, I thought it best to give him a second deliberate bullet through the head before raising the triumphant shout of "Gotovo" over my first Bruin. He was a little over the promised ten *poods*, and in very fine black coat, so that I was the recipient of numberless congratulations on the result.

Another bear which gave me considerable excitement and pleasure was brought to bag in this wise. I had been out, also with only one companion, the Baron Schimmelpennick, for two days after elk. It was rather an expensive amusement, as this particular preserve lay a long way from our shooting-box at Trubnikoff, and we had to transport old Stutzer and half a dozen keepers and dogs in sledges thither, not to mention paying three or four score beaters every day to accompany us if we should succeed in "ringing." We had, however, experienced the most atrocious luck; for though there were numbers of elk on the ground, some trifling accident always prevented a successful "flagging." On the third day we were full of hope, as Stutzer had reported a flock of eight or nine elk in a nice thick piece where they usually lay well, and we drove out as near as we dared whilst he and an old poacher named Gribus went to verify and flag the ring. An hour or two passed, and as it was bitterly cold — thirty degrees Reamur — we cleared a space, or rather tramped it down, and tried to keep ourselves a little warmer by dancing with some of the girl-beaters, who composed more than half of our force. Towards three, one of the trackers came back to tell us the elk were ringed, but not in their original wood, having gone on a mile or so. We slipped into our snowshoes at once and started off, but half-way were met by Stutzer, who declared that it was useless to try and do anything that day; that it was too late, the ring too big, etc.; in fact, a string of excuses. As, however, neither the Baron nor I wished to stay another day, we ordered the flags to be placed at once, and the beat to take place. I felt perfectly convinced that under these circumstances there was small chance of a shot, as Stutzer pretended to be sure we should not succeed; and if he wished the elk to escape, of course he could easily allow them to do so. When, however, after what seemed an interminable delay, the flags were up at last and the old man came round, he somewhat raised our hopes by saying the flock was still in, though he doubted if they would break cover before it grew

quite dark, the sun being already just on the horizon. We therefore told him not to waste time, but after five minutes from the beginning of the beat to drive it straight through.

The Baron was some fifty yards to my left with a "stop," unarmed, half-way between us and the usual "flags" beyond us. It was not long before we heard the elk crashing backwards and forwards, but in the still evening sound carries far, and it was growing so dusk that unless one of them galloped close past it would be almost impossible to hope to hit him.

Then the trampling and snapping of twigs ceased for a short while, and the wood turned blacker and blacker behind the streak of white snow foreground. Then came a steady crackling again, and I could see the birch tops bending one after another as the elk advanced. And yet "it" scarcely seemed coming with the gait of an elk altogether! In another moment I was aware (I cannot say that I saw him, or knew except instinctively that it was one) of a big bear swinging across a couple of yards of open snow. In less time than it takes to write the words I had fired, with the sort of sudden true snap-aim I have already mentioned, and the shot was followed by a fearful groan, so human and horrible that for an instant I had a ghastly fear that perhaps after all it was not a bear. I shouted to the Russian "Stop!" to ask him what it was I had shot, and he answered, "I fear it is Gribus!" My feelings may be imagined. I quickly was into my snow-shoes and on my way to the dark mass; but as soon as I was within a yard or two I could see I had made no mistake, and the first of the beaters to come out on the track was the shaggy-bearded Gribus himself. This was a very fine bear, of whose presence, curiously enough, none of the villagers round had been cognisant; consequently he cost me nothing, and was all the more welcome a trophy from having been secured as a pure surprise to myself and all concerned.

Before leaving the subject of bears I must give an idea of an unsuccessful expedition. Again we were only two, my comrade being one of the secretaries of our Embassy, who had never before seen a bear.

The *venue* was at a remote village requiring some three hours' railway travelling, and then about ten hours' sledging. The weather was neither good nor bad,—that is to say, neither really cold nor yet at all inclined to thaw,—but the roads were execrable, and we did not reach our destination till nearly noon, having had endless disputes with the *yemstchiks* the whole distance, which turned out to be over a hundred versts from the station instead of the sixty originally stated. We were then told that it would be too late to do anything that day, and had to wait till next morning and take another two hours' sledging to the *berloga*. At length and at last we were posted, but after making various inquiries I was tolerably sure that if the bear was really there, of which I was beginning to have doubts, and if the beat was properly managed, he was almost bound to come out along a certain little natural path crossing a nice shelter formed by a large fir-tree and some thick scrub. I therefore told the peasant who was placing the guns to station C. there, whilst I took up position commanding what looked the next most likely outlet. The bear was supposed to be a "ten-pooder" at least, and the cover was not very thick, though the young trees were pretty close together, which is apt to be fatal sometimes to shooting with ball at a running object. At anyrate it was not long before I heard the bear coming, not from where the peasants had pointed out as being approximately his lair, but still making directly for C.'s tree. To reach this he had to cross an almost open space not twenty yards off myself. To my disappointment I saw a lanky little red bear ambling along at a great pace, who did not look to weigh more than six or seven *poods*. Perhaps had he been a very fine specimen I should have been tempted to fire, but as it was I preferred to leave him to my companion. He went in a bee-line for the tree behind which I had told the headman to place C., and to my infinite astonishment went past it within a few feet without a shot being fired. On this I shouted, "Where are you, C.?" and on a reply coming from somewhere away behind on my left I threw

up my rifle in despair and let fly at the disappearing stern of the little brute, who was by then nearly a hundred yards off, well in the thick, and out of the ring. On hearing the shot, of course the peasants came rushing up, though they ought not to have left their posts till summoned—but I am giving this as an example of how a bear hunt ought *not* to be conducted. Reserving my rating for subsequent delivery, though I was so angry that I could hardly speak, I told them to follow the tracks of the bear. To my surprise they came back in ten minutes to say that he seemed to be badly hit, and had turned sharp round after the shot and gone back into the ring. Accordingly we took up positions again and sent in several dogs, who were soon round the quarry and barked themselves hoarse for more than an hour without moving Bruin. Two of the hunters then went in, but as soon as they were in sight of him the wounded bear got up with a growl, and they made haste to retreat. After tom-tomming and pistol-shooting had gone on for another hour, and the short day was drawing obviously near its close, we said that unless the bear were driven out forthwith we would ourselves go in and engage him in combat, a course which the directors of the beat would not hear of. In consequence of this threat the whole of the beaters, about one hundred and twenty, closed cautiously in with a most infernal uproar until within a few yards of where the beast lay, when he suddenly came out with a rush, scattering them like chaff in his path, and made off, apparently little the worse, clean across country. This was the only occasion on which I ever participated in a bear hunt where the animal was seen and not killed. Of course we had to pay all round, and having no time at our disposal, could not wait to carry on the chase after the wounded bear, who was resold within a day or two, and finally polished off by another Petersburg sportsman. So much for bear-shooting as practised from Petersburg. Anybody who really wanted to shoot a number of these creatures would do better to go away for a month or five weeks to Finland or Vologda,

and he might reckon with tolerable certainty on one head per day as an average. Personally I much preferred elk-hunting, as there always seemed to me a far greater element of uncertainty, and consequently of sport, in having to search out and ring in your own game than to have a sleeping bear found for you a month beforehand. As, however, the same system is employed for all big game, any further description of this grand sport is superfluous. What does not, however, appear to be generally known amongst modern Nimrods is that the practice of "calling" elk in the autumn is successfully followed by poachers and by one or two of the keenest of amateur sportsmen in Russia. When first I mentioned this fact in the columns of the *Field* several writers upheld that no European could ever call an elk, but on my mentioning the names of several well-known hunters in and round St. Petersburg, foremost amongst whom was M. Narishkin, who were themselves performers on the birch trumpet, and on offering to give oculer and oral demonstration to any unbeliever who cared to come to Russia for the purpose, the point was allowed. I never myself attempted this fascinating branch of woodcraft, since the exposure and fatigue which is entailed by elk-calling in the moss bogs in which they live was forbidden me. Several members of our club, however, essayed it under the wings of the poaching Gribus and old Sautner, both of whom could call an elk with comparative ease and certainty.

Other winter game produced at Trubnikof consisted of lynx, fox, and occasional wolves, whilst of course hares were plentiful enough for anybody who cared to take a little snowshoe exercise.

As soon as the snow melted began almost simultaneously the woodcock *tiaga* and the blackgame *tok*. The *tiaga* is really the first practice the shootist can obtain, and that must be the excuse for what is rather a murderous method of bringing the longbills to bag. As is well known to any student of the habits of game-birds, the woodcock just before pairing time is in the habit of flying backwards and forwards over certain favourite

woods, where the hens are popularly supposed to be concealed, and uttering a hoarse "croak, croak," alternating occasionally with a shrill, sharp sibilation. This manœuvre is begun about twenty minutes before sunset, and continues for about ten minutes after. The guns generally choose some wide drive or cutting in a forest over which the cock have been noticed flying, and take their chance as the gay wooer flits across the small open space overhead. Of course one is guided largely by the cry of the cock, but he is somewhat of a ventriloquist, and a novice at the *tiaga* will be astonished how small a percentage of his shots will tell. It is a delusion to think that only cock birds flight whilst the hens are hiding, as I have myself been sorry to find eggs inside a bird shot in this manner, since which incident I never cared much to kill a woodcock in the spring, though I always delighted in listening to the *tiaga* on the first delightful spring evenings.

The *tok* is of two kinds—the capercaillie *tok* and the blackcock *tok*. The former is *par excellence* the sport beloved of Austrians and Hungarians, many of whom would rather knock over an *Auerhahn* than a wild boar or a royal stag. There is no denying that it is difficult to repress a certain amount of excitement whilst "jumping" up to the capercaillie, but I never understood the wild enthusiasm of some of my friends for the *tok*, which I always enjoyed more as a natural scenic panorama than as a sport.

Every *tok* in our shooting was well known, and there were nine or ten of these—some very easy, reserved for the elderly and stout members; others far off and full of snares, which were allotted to the younger and more nimble.

Wherever you went you had to sleep out or sit out from eleven o'clock up till dawn, which in *tokking* time varies from four to two. The first *toks* will often begin in March whilst there is still plenty of snow on the ground, which makes it by no means easy, especially if it freezes at night, rendering the surface crackly.

On a fine night I would often make a bit of a fire for an hour or so, if not too near the *tok*, but generally the best thing to do is to roll up in good thick wraps and

sleep till the keeper wakes you. Then you will be treated to one of the most glorious and refreshing spectacles in the world—the awakening of the wood, the forest, and the beasts and birds therein. For an hour or so about midnight everything is still, even the owls hushing, and the first to begin to move again is the nightjar. Next to him is generally the woodcock, then the snipe, with its deafening drumming, so disproportionate to its size. After them the woodpeckers, blackcock, and capercaillie take up the chorus, which is soon joined by the whole feathered army, great and small, the noisiest and most distracting being the thrushes and jays. As I hope some day to write a small work on sport of various kinds in various lands, as I have seen and practised it, I will not enter into any minute details here of the capercaillie's song, as it is called, nor of his idiotic ecstasy during its penultimate bars, in the course of his execution of which I have, as an experiment, fired off three or four times within a few yards of him without the bird being aware of the fact. Nor will I describe the mysteries of the *skatchka*, the triple jump and imperative stop in any position, often with one arm and one leg immersed in ice cold water and reposing on a thorny snag until the cock chooses to resume his chant. All these would require too much explanation for anything but a professedly sporting book to find room for. I never shot more than three capercaillie myself in one morning, and latterly I never would shoot more than one, as there was no satisfaction to myself in killing the handsome bird when once I felt I had him there unconsciously at my mercy. I have heard, however, of six being brought home by one successful stalker—but this is a rare and almost record bag.

The blackcock *tok* is to my mind mere massacre, and ought to be forbidden by law. The blackcock differs from the capercaillie in his amours, in that he chooses an open arena to display his charms of voice and feather, and all the grey hens in the vicinity assemble and sit perched around the sort of circus where the candidates for their favour strut and fight.

This spot is chosen by a champion old cock known as the *tokovik,* who always arrives first on the ground and issues his challenge, trailing his wings as if they were an Irishman's coat-tails.

The Russian sportsman having discovered a *tok* constructs a *shalashka* or rough hut of boughs, in the most careless and shameless manner, right on the spot where the *tokovik* is wont to parade. Curiously enough, the birds seem in nowise scared by the sudden appearance of this excrescence. The careful sportsman repairs thither overnight, and sleeps in his hut; and very cold it is—far more so than within the shelter of the forest. Before it is light the old *tokovik* arrives, and is soon followed by a number of young and ambitious cocks, who generally fight amongst themselves, though occasionally a more than usually impertinent youngster will venture to come within range of the lord of the *tok.*

The sportsman from inside his hut is at liberty to shoot any cock he likes or can except the old one. At the report of his gun most of them will probably fly away for a short while, but only soon to return; and I have seen an old *tokovik* absolutely refuse to be frightened off, and come nearer and nearer to the *shalashka* at each report, crowing and roaring defiance. If by mistake the *tokovik* is killed the *tok* is at once deserted, but as long as he is unmolested, as many as five or six (or I daresay a dozen) may be killed several mornings running. Personally I killed one blackcock the first time I went *tokking*; but though I sometimes lay out for the fun of the sight, I never again could find it in my heart to shoot any of the performers. During the blackcock *tok* one sees another side of nature, that of the fields and marshes—the ridiculous antics of the snipe and ruff, the gambols of the hare, the prowl of the fox, and a hundred other pretty and unusual views of wild animal and bird life. In fact, though I had imagined myself a fair sportsman and woodcraftsman before I went to Russia, I learnt more in my first year there than I had previously gathered in all my experiences elsewhere. I have, however, already

said enough, if not too much, about shooting. Other sports which are very open to foreigners are fishing, tobogganning,—ice-hilling, as a mad flight on snowshoes from top to bottom of a snow-covered slope is called,—ice-yachting, racing,—on the flat, and over sticks or a country,—trotting, coursing, etc. My time was of course far too much taken up to allow of my doing more than seizing occasional chances of enjoying any of these, but I made several very pleasant fishing excursions, occasionally had a breathless scud in an ice-yacht at fifty miles an hour across the frozen bay of Cronstadt, went to the races at Czarskoe Selo, Kolomiaga, or the Semeonofsky Ploschad, whenever I could, and for two years attended, and judged in part, the dog shows and field trials of the Kennel Club. I doubt if there is much finer big trout fishing to be had anywhere in the world than at the Harakka Club, near the glorious Imatra Falls, in the Voksa, where in the season a minnow can hardly be cast before being seized by a monster who is more likely to weigh from 15 to 20 lbs. than from 10 to 15 lbs. I have also had some very delightful grayling fishing in another Finnish stream I need not name, catching trout, grayling, and big roach on the same fly one after the other as fast as I could cast; whilst farther north, within an hour or so of one of the principal towns, I have heard of 750 lbs. of salmon being taken by one rod with the fly in a season, and out of the same stream, when it was too late for ferox, I have creeled a hundred trout in an autumn afternoon. But were I once to give my memory the rein among my recollections of shooting and fishing, horses and dogs, and moor, river, and forest, I should soon be run away with clean out of the course and outside the flags. So I put on the curb and come back to Petersburg. But if I do it will only be, on paper as it usually was in reality, in order to leave it again. This time I will take you with me on to my *Datcha*. A *datcha*, be it known, is a very comprehensive term, meaning any sort of summer residence other than one's habitual home, and situated ever so little away from the

centre of the city. For instance, hundreds of townsfolk have *datchas* at Crestofsky, and even on the Vassili Ostroff. Probably it will surprise British readers to hear that the summer in St. Petersburg is nearly as hot and far more oppressive than at Constantinople or Cairo. Consequently nobody who can possibly manage to get away stays over the middle months of the year in the reclaimed bog on which the capital of the Czar is built.

As a rule, the Russian *datchnik* is merely a poor town sparrow, who flits as far as he can towards or into the country, and bores himself to death in the attempt to believe, and especially to make others believe, he is a country cousin. There is, of course, the rich and "noble" clique, most of whose members possess beautiful country houses of their own, and as soon as "Peter" becomes too hot, retire into a comfortable villegiatura surrounded with all the delights, and most of the disagreeables too, of their usual town existence. They carry their whole households with them, dress as carefully and elaborately, and are as punctilious in their visiting as if they were in their winter palaces. But these are not the genuine "*datchniky*," consisting of all the working population who can scrape together a hundred roubles or so, and who treat themselves to some little shanty nearer or farther from St. Petersburg as their business allows, whither, after the day's toil is over, they can escape from the miasmatic steam of the town for a few hours, lie on their backs on the grass, or paddle about in a marsh, and fancy themselves country gentlemen after their kind. Many of these spend an hour or two every evening in reaching their rural nest, where they arrive worn to a rag with heat and fatigue, and are compelled to rise next morning at five or six to take a train or boat back to their offices or bureaux. Yet such is the force of fashion and habit that a man who should spend his whole summer in St. Petersburg would be looked upon with either pity or contempt. A few of the braver spirits stand out against the tyrannous edict, and worry through the summer as best they can, with much more comfort to themselves than if they were daily tearing

backwards and forwards between their bureaux and a fictitious château which lacks all the ordinary comforts of life; but it requires considerable moral courage to assert plainly that the fashion of the *datcha*, or country villa, is arrant humbug, and, on the whole, it is but a small percentage which resists the outflowing tide that empties the streets of St. Petersburg from June onwards.

When I resolved to enrol myself in the ignoble army of *datchniky*, the first thing to do was to find a *datcha*, which should be far enough away from all other *datchas* to allow of my leading an independent, peaceful life, and which should really be in the country, remote from all town sights, sounds, and smells. I spent about a fortnight in visiting various advertised *datchas* all round Petersburg, on the islands, at Gatchino, Czarskoe Selo, Strelna, and suchlike fast resorts, but neither the houses nor the prices pleased me much. In the majority of instances, a most poky and wretched little *datcha* in any one of these modish hamlets would be ticketed at something like a hundred pounds for the three summer months, and this was altogether beyond my limit, even if the place had pleased me. At last, just as I was wearying of the quest, I saw a notice in the *Novoe Vremya*, as follows:—

"A desirable house of eight rooms, furnished throughout and beautifully situated on the banks of a river, to be let for the summer months. The house stands in its own grounds, which comprise ten thousand acres of wood and field, and the tenant would enjoy exclusive sporting rights over the land, together with five or six miles of fishing. Rent fifteen pounds from May to November."

This tempting bait it was which led to my becoming, for the first and last time, a *datchnik*. On inquiry, I found that the desirable house belonged to a lady, the daughter of a General high in the Imperial service, and boasting one of the oldest names in Russia. Mademoiselle Vera Borissovna was delighted at the prospect of a tenant, and begged me to go and see the place beforehand, which I had naturally already fully determined to do; and she promised to give notice to the steward of my arrival, so that he might show

me over the estate. Accordingly, I started off from the Warsaw Station by ten o'clock, and by two reached the nearest point by rail to the promised land. Here I found a diminutive steamer—a sort of steam launch, in fact—which ran up the river, and the captain undertook to deposit me under my future windows. My fellow-passengers consisted of a lady, bound for some other *datcha* on the way, and fifteen or sixteen peasants. The steamer service had lately been initiated by a German who had two small craft running alternately fifty versts up the very corkscrewy course of the river and back again to the station. The total cost per trip to him was probably about eight to ten roubles, and the average receipts about twenty-five or thirty; so the enterprise was paying well. Besides the passenger traffic he levied a post tax on the *datchniky* scattered along the banks, each, or most, of whom paid him a small subvention per month for bringing their newspapers and letters, which they would otherwise have either had to send for specially or go without. Altogether the venture was lucrative and easy.

We steamed along very leisurely, our course being considerably hampered by enormous rafts of logs floating down, not to mention that we ran our nose into the bank at every extra sharp turn where the current ran strong; but the scenery was lovely and the weather was fine, so that nobody grumbled. Our lady passenger had only a vague idea of whither she was bound, and we finally landed her in a hayfield with no house in sight for miles; but she shouldered her bag and tramped stoutly off across country in the firm belief that she would find her way somehow. The farther we went the prettier grew the landscape. Here and there a tiny village crowned a hill, and then the forests would reach from the sky-line right down to the marshy water's edge in beautiful variety of pine, oak, and beech. It took us a good four hours to come in sight of a red-roofed cottage, perched on an eminence, which was pointed out to me as my *datcha*.

For the last half-hour we ploughed through a broad lake with a fringe of thick flags and water-lilies, and into

a racing rapid, through which the river poured from another lake a quarter of a mile higher up. The site was certainly admirable, and some serious misgivings I had felt, in spite of all the glowing accounts given to me, began to disappear. We whistled shrilly as we came opposite Pokrovsky,—for so I will call the village,—and with my traps I was bundled into a boat and quickly landed on the shingly shore. So far so good, and I opined the steward would shortly come and annex me. There was, however, nobody visible, except a young peasant who had met the boat and taken a letter from the captain, which he opened and read. After its perusal he turned to me and inquired what I wanted at Pokrovsky? To which I replied that I wished to see the steward, and through him the *datcha* of Varotta. Hereupon he pulled off his cap and said that he had only that minute received the letter announcing my possible arrival—that he was the steward, and would do all that he could for me. Having fetched the keys, we climbed up to the house, which had not been opened since last year. On the whole, it was perhaps rather a favourable specimen of a Russian *datcha*. Three out of every five of the doors and windows seemed to shut, and the walls appeared to be tolerably watertight. It was, of course, built of wood, with several stoves, which, however, could never have been lighted, as it would be too hot in summer to need them, and in winter twenty such could not have saved one from being frozen to death. There were, as stated in the advertisement, eight rooms and a kitchen, a pretty porch in front smothered in flowering lilac, a patch of ground which might be made into a kitchen garden on one side, and a big covered balcony looking out over the river and the lake behind. The furniture was of the sort always provided—a few tables and chairs, some low shelves boarded in to serve as beds, a wardrobe or two, and a couple of ancient divans. As everybody always brings his own furniture with him, this is a matter of secondary importance in taking a villa. A few hundred yards away from the house stood the farm, an extensive range of buildings falling more or less to rack

and ruin, but, nevertheless, inhabited by the steward, by the proprietress when she came down to visit her estate, by a couple of dozen horses and cows, and a pack of savage hounds. The former steward used to hunt with these dogs, and generally enjoy himself; but having fallen out with his mistress on some details of management, had retired on a competency, and his place had lately been taken by the young fellow I saw, an ex-corporal of the *gardes-à-cheval*. What his qualifications may have been for the post of land-steward I failed to discover, either on first inquiry or later acquaintance; but he was a smart, obliging man, and had the reputation of being honest on a salary, not too munificent, of ten roubles, or one sovereign, a month. The house being full of dust and dirt, and, temporarily, quite uninhabitable, I appeased the hunger which eight hours of travelling had created by drinking bowls of cream and eating wild strawberries in the middle of the farmyard, whilst a room was being swept and prepared for the night.

As far as prospects of dinner went, they appeared to be confined to the problematical results of the embassy of a ragged little girl sent down to some fishermen on the lake. She soon returned with a couple of pike and some perch, and with these and a few eggs a decent enough supper was furnished. No meat was ever to be had nearer than the railway station, though chandleries of the commoner sort could be bought at the village shop in a hamlet that could be seen nestling amongst the hills on the other side of the lake. Beer of a vile kind was also retailed there, of which I tasted a specimen bottle; but it was evident that anybody meaning to live at Pokrovsky would have to bake their own bread, arrange for a supply of meat from St. Petersburg, and bring their own drinkables and other luxuries with them. Whilst at dinner a venerable old man stalked up to the balcony, and, naming himself as representative of the local authorities, expressed a desire to see my passport; but on hearing that on this occasion I was only passing the night there, consented to overlook the absence of this indispensable document. Soon after him

a toothless dame staggered up the hill, bending beneath the weight of a sack of potatoes which she had carried for fifteen versts. Owing to her dental deficiencies it was difficult to understand a word she said, but the steward told me she was ninety-five years old, though still very active and hardworking. Later on I hired a boat from her, a heavy, lumbering concern, which she towed up herself for several miles, in the water up to her knees, and altogether she seemed to be capable of any ordinary man's labour.

On questioning the steward about the sporting capacities of the estate, he declared that game of all sorts abounded, from bears, in such numbers that the peasants were afraid to go into the thick woods, down to snipe and quail. He also gave great accounts of the coarse fishing, and related how one haul of the net on the lake was sold last year for four hundred and twenty roubles to peasant speculators on the banks. Seeing the price is something like twenty to thirty copecks a *pood* of forty pounds, one rouble would, roughly, buy a hundredweight, so that the catch must have been enormous; and the fact of its having really occurred was confirmed to me afterwards by one who bought a third part of it, and made a handsome profit on the transaction. As the steamer passed on its backward journey at eight o'clock in the morning, and I wished to have a stroll and a dip in the lake before leaving, I dismissed the steward at ten, and turned in to a sleep somewhat troubled by mosquitoes, but quickly brought on by the sweet, fresh air blowing in at the windows. At four o'clock I was wakened to drink a bowl of warm milk, and ten minutes later was on my way through the dew-soaked grass to the ice-cold water of the lake. That evening I was back amidst the smells and fumes of St. Petersburg, having thoroughly made up my mind that, circumstances permitting, it would not be long before I paid my hundred and fifty roubles, and became lord of the manor of Pokrovsky, its broad woods and marshes, its river and sedgy lakes, its steward, its horses and cows, and its simple peasantry. It was a *datcha* of

the genuine sort, and if it had been nearer to town and more easy of access would have commanded a fabulous price. But what were its disadvantages to most were its principal attractions to myself. When we finally took possession, the first thing to be done was a thorough wash and clean out, and after that a plugging up of faulty doors and windows. The constructors of the house seemed to have had a curious idea of decoration. The place was built of logs—was in fact nothing more than a large and substantial log hut, its interstices being filled up with moss. Yet the ceilings were most carefully papered, so that whilst the doors, windows, and walls, and the rest of the interior, had been left in woody nakedness fresh from the adze and innocent even of the plane, the stoves and ceilings had received the whole of the artistic and decorative attention of the architect in the shape of paint and flowered papers. There were very few conveniences for the stowage of articles of everyday use, so we had ourselves to put up several rows of shelves; and these, with a hundred or two of big nails driven into the walls, served instead of cupboards or chests of drawers. It may not be very elegant to have one's wardrobe hung up round the room, but at anyrate all the garments are handy, and they also in some degree fill up the bareness of the room. We had an ice-cellar of a rough and rude sort, but quite good enough; and the garden, which we planted a month or so before entering, already began to show promise. This garden ultimately proved a great stand-by, as market gardening is very little practised generally in Russia away from the large towns, and but for our home-grown salads we should often have been entirely without green meat. We arranged with the steamer to bring us papers and letters every evening, and take in our own correspondence the following morning for a consideration of three roubles a month. This was absolutely necessary, for the St. Petersburg Post Office, which is in many respects a well-managed branch of the public service, seems to wash its hands of the world which lies outside a certain radius of its nearest office. There was no country postman in our

district at anyrate, and but for the steamer we might have gone without our letters until we chose to fetch them from the railway station, thirty-five versts off. It is a curious commentary on Russian methods that whilst every letter addressed in any foreign language is readdressed by hand at the central office, word for word, entailing an almost inconceivable amount of work on the staff, and delaying the deliveries by a waste of hours, yet with all this elaborate machinery at headquarters, anybody living a few miles off the regular postal routes cannot by any amount of persuasion get his letters forwarded. Thanks, however, to our little steamer, we had nothing to complain of, and only received our mails with evening tea instead of with breakfast coffee.

Behind us lay several small and insignificant villages with never a shop amongst them, the two *emporia* of commerce being situated on the other side of the river; the one in a hamlet just opposite the house, the other at some glassworks about two miles off on the edge of the lake. The consequence of this was that the peasants in want of provisions had to cross the water, and there was neither bridge nor ferry for many a verst. Now, amongst the plant or so-called fixtures appertaining to the *datcha* was a small rowing boat, which I immediately fitted with a strong chain and padlock, and having built a jetty of planks in the shallows, fastened the boat to it, as I fancied, quite securely. Necessity, however, knows no law, and whenever we wanted our boat it was generally to be seen high and dry on the other side. I then bought for six roubles another bigger craft, a simple "dug-out," to use as a fishing punt; but it soon became public property like the small skiff. At first we hid the oars, but that was of no avail, as the pirates simply broke down a young tree and punted themselves across, or if in too great a hurry, they took up one of the bottom boards. Remonstrance was in vain, and in a very short while our oars were stolen and our boats lapsed into the common domain. The nearest authority lived ten miles away, and the villagers knew very well that strangers coming to spend a month or two

were scarcely likely to burden themselves with a prosecution. In the same manner as they made free with our craft so also did they treat with scorn and contempt the pretended (and indisputable) fishing and shooting rights of the proprietor. I once saw our worthy landlady, or lady of the manor, standing on the bank and protesting against the fishermen netting her water, vehemently declaring that they had no business there. But they simply laughed good-naturedly in her face, with chaffing retorts such as, "Ah! easy there, Vera Borissovna. It isn't your water at all; it's God's water!" or else, taking up a canful, "Is it the water you want, Barina? You are welcome to it; but the fish belong to those who can catch them." And the fusilade that went on all day every Sunday, and on week-day mornings and evenings, showed that the Pokrovsky estate was the happy hunting-ground of the poacher; whilst I once saw a poulterer contractor coolly take off more than two thousand head of blackcock, hazel, and willow grouse from my own little jetty under my nose, most of which had certainly been killed in the covers over which I was supposed to have sole sporting rights.

Seeing the way things went, I hired one of the most notorious *braconniers* directly I took possession of Varotta, to assist me on my shooting excursions. Before I had been there a week I caught a loafer in a wood which, I believed, belonged to the estate. He wore a powder-and-shot flask, but professed to be picking strawberries. A little search, however, revealed his gun, hidden in a tuft of grass, which I estreated, and told him he might call for it when he liked. Next day he arrived in a pelting storm of rain, and, uncovering himself, knelt down on the grass under the balcony and begged for his gun. I told him that I had just sent it to the Volossnoy Upravlenieh (rural police centre), where he would find it, and probably get a month's imprisonment. On hearing this he broke out in mournful howls, and declared that he had never been on Pokrovsky ground at all. I had meanwhile found out that the wood where I had met him was really

not part of my shooting; but wishing to give him and his like a fright, I wrote out a full confession of guilt, which I offered him to sign if he wanted his gun back. He affixed his signature very regretfully, observing parenthetically that it was a colossal lie, but that God was merciful, and that it did not much matter what he wrote, as the devil might fly away with him if he ever gave me another chance of catching him.

My own private poacher, transformed for the nonce into head keeper, lived about eight miles from the house in a clearing in the forest. His "village" consisted of four houses and nine "souls"—that is, nine able-bodied men, women and children having no souls in Russia. His own family comprised his father, mother, pretty sister, and three sons, himself the third and youngest. The rest of the "souls" were all relations. At the liberation of the serfs they were left in possession of their cottages and a very small patch of land each. As the families grew, however, they had need of more land, and took it from the proprietress on the usual terms of giving all the labour and taking half the yield. For various reasons, though, the landlordess wished to get rid of them, as she did not like this little nest right in the middle of her estate. She offered them broader and better fields elsewhere, but they declined. She threatened to put the law in motion; but they resisted with their own lawyer and won the day, and an armed peace was signed. Instead of paying rent in kind for the land they cultivated, they paid in roubles, and were extremely flourishing. I inquired of Vera Borissovna the reason of the special prosperity of this little colony, and she said that it was partly owing to their own shrewdness and industry, but chiefly to their position in the centre of the wood, and on the edge of a vast moss bog. From the wood it was impossible to prevent them from helping themselves to fuel and game, and the wild fruit on the marsh was a small fortune to them. The principal trade is in cranberries, which grew there in a profusion I have never seen approached elsewhere. An old woman could gather eighty pounds in a day, and as the St. Petersburg

dealers pay three to four copecks a pound, she could earn three roubles a day. Wild raspberries and strawberries were also especially fine, together with the rarer *maroshka*, a kind of white raspberry, rather insipid in taste, but much appreciated by amateurs. It may amuse English readers to learn the terms of my agreement with Vassili. He was to be at my disposal whenever I wished him to accompany me in the woods and carry cartridges and game. He was to have a room and a bed at my disposal at all times, and to feed myself and my dogs with milk, honey, eggs, bread, etc. He had to provide a horse for me to ride home after any specially hard day, and he was to abstain from shooting game himself on the Pokrovsky estate. Elsewhere he was free to poach as much as he liked. For these multifarious services he received twenty roubles, or two pounds, a month, and he earned them honestly, thinking nothing of walking the eight miles to meet me, then going through a long day of ten or twelve hours, and walking back alongside the pony to see me home by ten or eleven at night, reaching his own cottage again after midnight.

The glass factory on the lake was the most important feature in the domestic economy of the district. It employed a varying number of hands, from six hundred up to eight or nine. All the skilled artisans were extremely well paid, and the turnout was very large. Three times a week a steam tug took four barges laden with glass down the river to the railway, at a cost entirely nominal, and this facility of transport rapidly made the fortunes of the owners. The finest sand abounded everywhere, and hitherto they burnt their own wood, but, having exhausted the supply, they were now constructing new furnaces for burning petroleum. As each barge carried five hundred *poods*, the weekly production of glass ware may be roughly estimated at one hundred tons. Every imaginable kind of article in glass was produced, from the very commonest bottles and tumblers up to delicate chemical retorts and fine-cut decanters. There was no sale at the works, but the hands stole as much as they wanted,

and probably nowhere else in Russia were the poorest houses so plentifully supplied with table and household glass. We had scarcely been a couple of days in the *datcha* before a disreputable-looking lad presented himself with various articles, which he offered to sell for next to nothing. The factory itself is the centre of a considerable village, all of whose wants are supplied by one mean-looking shop. But if the exterior is paltry, there are big storehouses behind, and the trade done is astonishing. The shop is kept by a middle-aged spinster, whose sister holds a restaurant at the railway station. Besides these two establishments, the family, which includes a nephew, are proprietors of a *kabak*, or grog shop, about a mile and a half away from the factory, and the only one in the district. By law no *kabak* is allowed near to a factory in country districts, and the privilege of opening this one, and their shops, together with a small capital necessary for commencing business, they owe to their old feudal lord, who, on the emancipation, granted them these favours. The weekly turnover in the fusty little shop at the factory averaged two thousand roubles, of which at least fifty per cent. may be reckoned clear profit; and there were no bad debts, for, by arrangement with the Company, the hands were supplied on credit, and the accounts paid direct by the cashier to the shop out of the wages. Perhaps the most extraordinary feature of the business was that the lady in charge could neither read nor write with any fluency, yet she managed her accounts so excellently that she was reputed to be worth about seventy thousand pounds sterling. This included the profits of the other two establishments, but excluded the value of the houses themselves, being her, or rather the family, fortune in cash. In spite of this wealth, however, these good folk retained their pristine simplicity, and served their counters, or the table of a guest, as respectfully and civilly as the humblest paid servant. It is almost unnecessary to add that they were of German descent, and that it was their Teuton caution and business blood which enabled them to profit so largely out of the careless, spendthrift Russian.

On Sundays the factory was closed, and the country-side rang with revelry. The harmonica is the favourite musical instrument, and singing and dancing went on everywhere to a liberal accompaniment of vodka, which towards evening generally got the better of the crowd, and laid them out on the grass or in the first comfortable ditch. The second Sunday we spent at Pokrovsky, a couple of vagabonds came stumbling up the hill, in a very excited condition, to beg leave to take our boat. Had they not been drunk they would have despised this formality, but, as it was, they were very earnest, finally declaring that they needed it to rescue a comrade, who was very helpless and trying to walk across the river. Had he really been drowning, the assistance of his friends would have arrived far too late, but, luckily, the pair came back in about ten minutes to say he had swum across all right, and would we give them a cigarette? As they were only slightly the worse, and seemed merry dogs, we treated them to another bottle of beer and drew them on to tell us their stories, which they were quite ready to do, even to the extent of one of them relating how he had lately robbed his uncle, a retired old soldier, of six hundred roubles, the savings of a lifetime. The old gentleman had gone nearly mad with grief and rage, and as a last resort had promenaded through the village vowing that if he did not recover his money in twenty-four hours he would go to the sorceress. This threat decided the thief, who forthwith slid the money under the door. "Because, you see," he remarked, "that sorceress is very dangerous. She puts water in a saucepan, and my uncle would have looked in the saucepan and seen my face, and if he had put his finger in my eye in the water I should have soon become blind. I preferred to give the money back and keep my eyes." No amount of questioning or chaff could shake their belief in the power of this village witch, who has a great reputation for versts round. One of these scamps had his accordion with him, and his companion, though he could not stand upright without support, insisted on treating us to a series of fantastic dances, on the

conclusion of which they doffed their caps respectfully, and smoking one cigarette between them in turns, ambled off to their home, about two miles off.

One day I had a long conversation with the proprietress of Pokrovsky, Vera Borissovna. Of course the estate was not really named Pokrovsky, nor did it belong to a Vera Borissovna, but, barring the names, which are taken haphazard, there is nothing imaginary in my descriptions. I found my energetic landlordess, crowned with a dilapidated straw hat and shod in stout boots, standing in the farmyard, and dealing out medicine to some peasants who had tramped a long way to have the benefit of her skill. She was just starting to superintend the erection of a new threshing-floor and grange, which she was building without the assistance of any professional architect. The work was not in a very advanced stage, but, with the eye of faith, Mademoiselle Vera already saw her machinery installed in one piece, the horses going round in another, and the grain piled high in a third. The bricks were being burnt close by, and the walls were composed of big lumps of granite as a basis, only the exterior being levelled with bricks. The mortar was verily of a villainous quality, but possibly the weight of stone would keep the concern standing, if it ever were finished. It seemed, nevertheless, a parlous undertaking, and one which very few Society ladies in England or elsewhere would enter upon with such absolute confidence. For Vera Borissovna was essentially an aristocrat of the aristocrats, boasting some of the oldest blood of Russia, owning a magnificent house in one of the most fashionable streets of St. Petersburg, besides two or three country estates, and speaking half a dozen languages purely and fluently. On these estates she spent most of the summer months, making all her own contracts with her tenants, and acting as her own steward, surveyor, architect, farmer, and what not. She had been in some perplexity the week before as to how she was to blast her stone, but in the nick of time a party of travelling blasters had come along, and had been engaged forthwith. These men furnished all their own

tools and powder, and charged one penny per inch drilled in the granite, a rate of remuneration which could hardly leave very large profits. Besides thus obtaining the necessary stone, a valuable field was gradually being cleared of the rocks and boulders with which it was covered, and a double end was being served at one and the same time. Our appearance on the scene was the signal for redoubled activity, but nobody seemed able to do much more than dig without appealing to Mademoiselle for instructions, which were always given with the unhesitating authority of a professional architect; though whether the lady herself actually felt the confidence she professed in being about shortly to finish the work, it would be difficult to say. She was leaving that afternoon to visit another estate of hers some thirty or forty miles away, there to decide a knotty point, whether or no to cut down a forest of young birch and turn it into meadow land. She, apparently, had neither asked, nor had any intention of asking, for outside advice, but was merely going to settle the point after inspecting the quality of the wood and of the grass. Seeing that she had a hundred and one directions and orders to give before her journey, I left her after a hearty invitation to attend her winter receptions, and wondered if I should recognise in a drawing-room the energetic farmer lady I said "good-bye" to at Pokrovsky.

As a large proportion of general readers are ladies, a fact which writers are occasionally too apt to forget, a few details of our housekeeping arrangements in the *datcha* may, perhaps, be of interest. We were five in number at table, with three servants, and the total expenses for the first month, including wine and beer, and everything in fact, except wages, amounted to sixteen pounds twelve shillings. (The rent, as already stated, was fifteen pounds.) For this sum we had a morning breakfast, a heavy meal at two o'clock, and a supper again at ten. The usual *menu* would be soup, fish, beef or mutton, game, salad, and a sweet dish, four or five bottles of beer, and one or two of wine. The butcher

came once a week, and we then bought all that was wanted, and kept it in the ice-cellar. Meat was fifteen copecks, or about fivepence a pound—a chicken the same price; eggs three farthings apiece, milk a penny a pint, and cream threepence a pound; fruit of most sorts a penny a pound, a circumstance of which we profited to make a great stock of jams and syrups; and vegetables were cheap enough, when procurable at all. We relied chiefly, though, on our own kitchen garden for these, and also baked our own bread. The second month, having learnt more of the ways and capacities of the place, the bills amounted to just under ten pounds, the principal item being the beer and wine. These figures read very temptingly, but it is only right to add that we enjoyed the experience of an extremely clever housekeeper, and no visitor from England could hope to buy his holiday so cheaply. At the same time, by engaging a respectable German-and-Russian-speaking cook, of whom there are dozens always to be had by advertisement, an English family might take a *datcha*, and spend two or three months far more cheaply than in the usual holiday resorts.

But I fear that I have already severely tried the patience of the reader with descriptions of country life in Russia, and so must bring this chapter to a close. It would indeed be easy to fill a decent-sized volume with recollections of my four years passed in the empire of the Czar, but as I have only this one chapter, which has already reached its destined length, I must leave untouched for the present my pleasant souvenirs of the Volga and Finland, of Moscow and Little Russia, and with regret turn southward.

CHAPTER XI

THOUGH I enjoyed myself immensely in Russia, it only became more apparent the longer I stayed there that St. Petersburg was a tomb for a newspaper correspondent. The illness and death of the Emperor Alexander, and the marriage of Nicholas II., gave us a temporary spell of work, but as soon as the new order had taken the place of the old the censorship lapsed into its pristine barbarity, and news became as scarce as it was wont to be. I was consequently not sorry professionally when the *Standard* offered to give me Constantinople as a change, and I was back in my first love amongst Eastern cities when the Dongola Expedition was decided on. I received my instructions from Mr. Mudford on Monday the 16th March, and left for Cairo by the next steamer on Wednesday, reaching the Hotel Continental on the 21st, in time for lunch. The first thing to be done was to buy horses and kit; and this was no easy task, as most of the available nags had been snapped up at once, and dealers were opening their mouths very wide for anything good. After a great deal of inspection and haggling, I finally purchased a handsome bay, for which I had to give £40, but as he was nearly thoroughbred it was not really very dear. A many-coloured tent of the usual Egyptian pattern was the next purchase, and the Citadel stores furnished me with almost everything else. These stores were under the charge of Major Gordon, a nephew, I believe, of the hero of Khartoum, and it was owing in a large measure to their capabilities that the Dongola Expedition was enabled to start at such short notice and to be so admirably equipped throughout the campaign. Not to mention also that it was out of them too that special war correspondents were permitted to

fit themselves out with a thoroughly serviceable kit at about one-fourth of the cost of the articles as priced in shops. To take one example: a Sam Brown belt in the Citadel cost something like five or six shillings, and the same article was ticketed at thirty-five shillings in the Ezbekieh. The most admirable of all the necessaries to be found at the Citadel, and nowhere else, were the canvas water bottles. I believe I have seen the water bottles of most armies and peasantry, but nothing approaches the Egyptian Army pattern for serviceableness and for keeping the water cool. The bottle, or bag rather, is made out of thick canvas, which soon becomes absolutely watertight, and into one corner of it is sewn firmly about two inches of the neck of a bottle; a cork is attached with a string, and a couple of stout brass rings or D's are stitched in. With a couple of double swivels this bottle can easily be snapped on the D's of a saddle, and will keep the water cool and fresh on the hottest day in a way which I have never seen any other do. It is also very capacious, holding, I should think, a couple of quarts. Later on in the campaign these bottles were in great demand, and certainly, were I ever again to travel in a country where water had to be carried, I should not take less than half a dozen of the E.A. pattern.

My outfit from the Citadel comprised a saddle, cavalry pattern, several of these water bottles, a camel riding saddle, a cavalry sword and belt, holsters, and numerous saddle bags. Had I wanted, I could also have clothed myself in riding breeches and coat of *khaki*, boots, etc.; but though I believe most of my colleagues are in the habit when on the warpath of donning *khaki* and helmets, I always found it more comfortable myself to dress in flannels or good light cloth, and to wear a broad-brimmed Terai hat—single for choice. I mention this latter article especially on account of the current delusion that a pith helmet is the only protection against sun-stroke. I can only say, speaking from a long experience, that I have always found a single grey felt hat adequate, and much cooler than any helmet. But of course hats

and clothes must always be a matter of personal taste. Whilst on the subject of heat and head covering, though, I must warn any misguided stranger from doing what most of the newspaper specials with the Dongola Field Force did, namely, shaving their heads with the idea of feeling cooler. As a matter of fact, the hair is much the best shield against the sun, and to lay bare the crown of one's head we soon found to be the greatest mistake in the world.

Two or three days were sufficient for me to get together all I wanted and to start my horse and groom off to Belianeh by land.

When I at length reached the post-boat, the *Hatasoo*, I found several old friends on board, amongst them being Hickman and Maxwell, the latter, whom I have already mentioned as a boxer, being now a Brigadier-General. Another passenger who attracted some attention was Dr. Conan Doyle, who was going up to get notions. As nobody was allowed south of Assouan without being on recognised business, the novelist had taken a temporary commission as Special Correspondent for, I think, the *Westminster Gazette*, and another amateur was Mr. Julian Corbett for the *Pall Mall*.

On getting to Assouan I found several colleagues already there—Knight of the *Times*, Scudamore of the *Daily News*, Gwynne for *Reuter*, Seppings Wright for the *Illustrated*, and Pearce for the *Graphic*. Soon afterwards we were joined by Sheldon for *Black and White*, and Garrett for the *New York Herald*, with Atteridge for the *Chronicle*.

As in Cairo I had had to buy a horse before all things, so in Assouan it behoved me to buy camels, and I soon had three of these horrid creatures, which are of all beasts the most disagreeable and unlovable. In fact, when I paraded before leaving for Wady Halfa, my caravan already consisted of one horse, three camels, a donkey, two grooms, a cook, and a body servant. The donkey was bought with the intention of occasionally riding him myself, but he was usually bestridden either by the cook

or the valet, irrespective of any amount of luggage the poor little brute had to carry, on the top of which they would perch themselves. If it be of any service to future correspondents or travellers in Egypt, I may here remark that it is quite fatal to peace to have a team of servants of different breeds. They should be either all Berberins or all Egyptians, as these two races never get on together, and do nothing but quarrel and fight all day and all night. As it is very difficult to get a decent Egyptian groom, this trade being almost monopolised by the Berberins, it will generally be found better to take a Berber for sofrâgee and cook—impudent and scampish as he is pretty sure to be. It does not matter so much in a groom, but insolence and other common Berber vices are extremely objectionable when more obtruded, as they are in the person of domestic attendants. However, everyone must take his own choice between the various evils of camp servants, which are amongst the most trying of all in a campaign.

After being a few days at Assouan most of the correspondents decided to march to Halfa, instead of going up by boat, chiefly as a sort of preliminary canter, so to speak, in order to see how our arrangements would work. The night before we invited Captain Lyons, who was anchored off Philæ in his dahabeeyah, engaged in archæological work, to dinner on board his own boat. That is to say, we provided one or two dishes, and he found all the rest; but we had a merry evening, and only separated at midnight. I pitched my camp by the old railway station, and had my first sleep out, surrounded by my grunting camels and retainers. Next morning it struck us that we had better have a guide, and this commodity did not arrive from Assouan till three in the afternoon. We determined to start, nevertheless, and did so, not without difficulty, an hour later. Just about sunset we reached a horrible *akabah*, or defile, and each camel had to be separately escorted and supported down it, with much objurgation and many cries of "Ya Sâtir," "Ya Sahib el Hawiyeh." By the time we reached the bottom it was quite dark, and we were all somewhat the worse for wear. However,

the indefatigable Scudamore undertook to cook us some dinner,—our *chef* having been sacked at Philæ, from the failure of his efforts at a currie the day before,—and we turned in fairly comfortably at about ten. Next morning loading-up took us an hour, which was disappointing; though, as a simple fact, we never succeeded in performing this operation much more rapidly, even after months of practice. It was very hot even when we started at half-past seven, and soon after noon we elected to go no farther that day, and camped under a big banian tree. Next day we reached Kalabsheh, a town which supplies half Egypt with grooms and *saïsses*, and where, of course, all our servants had families and relations.

Next morning we threaded a most atrocious pass, but came out of it with whole skins, singing "Litoria" and other songs of our native land. This was on the 5th of April — Easter Day. Our march was continued, with various amusing incidents to ourselves, up to the 9th, when we entered Korosko, and with one consent voted for doing the rest of the journey by water, leaving our beasts to come on in charge of the servants. I had here to have my horse shod, or rather unshod, as he had cast a shoe, and I thought it best to take off the companion one. The whole veterinary and farrier force of the Korosko garrison was required, however, as the brute refused to allow the smith to approach him. With great difficulty he was at last thrown, and his shoe removed, but not until he had severely kicked and bruised two or three men, for which damages I had to pay the usual compensation. His bad temper, however, decided me to get rid of him, which I did soon after at Halfa, exchanging him with Colonel C. Martyr for a quieter and steadier old grey.

At Halfa we found things very busy in preparation for the later advance. It was here, too, that we were first brought under discipline. To begin with, we were asked to give our word of honour not to send, or try to send, any telegraphic messages otherwise than through the Censor—that is, we were not to post them to Cairo or intermediate stations. This was rather a facer for some of us, as it at

once reduced us all more or less to the same level of news allowed to pass by the Censor. On the other hand, it did away with a good deal of the cut-throat rivalry usually exhibited when "specials" are on the warpath, and it was not altogether an unpopular decree. We were also given our rations for camels and horses, etc., and free quarters were at once found for us in a couple of pleasant little villas on the banks of the Nile. Our amateur colleagues, Doyle and Corbett, here left us, with, I think, many mutual regrets; they that they could not accompany the expedition, and we that we were losing such excellent comrades.

At Halfa I made a fresh addition to my outfit, in the shape of a felucca, or little sailing boat. As soon as the bargain was completed, I sent it up the cataract, and it was the last craft to pass the gates up to Sarrass until the Nile began to rise. This boat was throughout the latter half of the campaign one of the greatest boons to me, being capable of carrying the whole of my kit and conveying me from place to place in luxury and comfort, compared to which riding on camels, or even horses, was hard labour. The felucca was partially decked, and large enough for me to spread a thick mattress and lie at full length, if so inclined. Though not averse to plenty of hard exercise when necessary, I have always tried to take my rest as completely as practicable; and one of my camels usually carried little else than an *ankareeb* or native bedstead and my folding mattress and other bed-furniture. This sybaritism brought down a certain amount of chaff on the *Standard* correspondent, but I fancy there was also at times a good deal of envy when night-time came on, and my big four-legged bed was got ready.

Time lagged very wearily at Halfa, as the river fell lower and lower, and the sun grew hotter and hotter, and we had next to nothing to do, to see, or to write about. At last came the little scrimmage at Akasheh—the first action of the campaign—between some Egyptian cavalry and some dervish irregulars. The news reached Halfa one evening, and was given to the Press after dinner at about ten by Maxwell, who was then Camp Commandant, but

who would not allow us to wire anything. Next morning several of us were up very early, in the hopes of getting off the first news; but it transpired afterwards that it had been sent straight from Cairo the night before, so that the veto on our sending and our energies the following morning were equally superfluous. The story of the fight, however, had broken the monotony, and we at once asked leave to go to Akasheh and visit the scene of action. This was only granted with certain restrictions, such as that we were all to make one party, and to go and return with a camel convoy, etc. Under these circumstances, I, for one, did not think it worth while; but as I had found out several *lacunæ* in my arrangements,—especially wishing also to make some special understanding about "urgent" telegrams,—I thought I would run down to Cairo whilst my colleagues were at Akasheh.

Whilst there I settled that by marking messages "Urgent" they would pay the treble rate all through, but by marking "Local urgent" they would only be taxed extra as far as Alexandria, and of course would have precedence over the whole of the Egyptian system.

No sooner had I returned than I had a characteristic skirmish with the Sirdar. I had learnt, quite legitimately, as far as I was concerned, the formation of the columns which were to march from Akasheh, together with the names of the new Brigadiers, Macdonald, Lewis, and Maxwell, together with various other details, and wrote out a telegram containing this information. No sooner had Sir H. Kitchener seen this than an orderly was sent to fetch me, and he inquired if I imagined he was going to let such a message pass. I replied that I did not see any harm in it myself; but of course that was for him to judge. He replied that there was not so much in the telegram, but that what he objected to was the fact that I should be in possession of information which he declared was only known to one or two others besides himself.

"Why, none of the Brigadiers themselves know they are going to get their brigades! A nice thing, indeed!

They would be getting messages from England, 'Congratulate you, old chappie,' and they would not know what for! It destroys all my confidence in my staff and in you correspondents; that is all I can say!"

This was rather a serious imputation, to which I could only retort that if he had any accusation to make against me, I should be quite ready to meet it; but that I could assure him that none of his staff had betrayed his confidence by so much as a word. He was not to be pacified, however, and evidently only half believed me, as was proved by an order immediately issued, that nobody on the staff was to hold any communication whatever with the war correspondents. This absurd order continued in force until after the battle of Ferket. I call it absurd, because either we and they were fit to hold our respective positions, or we were not. If not, the matter ought to have been threshed out and the guilty punished; but if we were blameless, why should we be treated like naughty school children?

On Tuesday the 2nd June, with heartfelt delight, we bid farewell to Wady Halfa, and started at two in the afternoon in a so-called saloon carriage, packed like sardines, with the Black Officers of the Tenth Soudanese Battalion. It was stifling hot, and the train simply crawled along, finally reaching Ambigol Wells at ten at night, and depositing us casually in the middle of the desert. Luckily for me, I found two hospitable engineer boys, Lieutenants Girouard and Pritchard, who gave me some whisky and soda, after which I rolled myself up in a rug on the sand, and slept for an hour or two; but at three o'clock the whole camp moved. The Intelligence Department and the "Specials" left at ten, but as I was expecting some more luggage up from Sarrass, I waited over lunch-time, despatching a *magnum* of champagne with the new Brigadier-General, Lewis, and then writing correspondence until four, when, together with my artist colleague, who had kept me company, I mounted, and we marched out with the gallant Tenth. We merely went for an hour or two, though, and turned in early that night, only to rise at

daybreak on the 4th, and push on to Okmeh, where we found Colonel Wingate and Lieutenant Smyth in possession of an otherwise deserted camp. There had been a big fire there the day before, and being foolish enough to lie down under some palms, just outside the edge of the burnt patch, I was soon so smothered in fleas that a bath in the river and another in a tub provided by Smyth could not rid me of the pests. Next morning we pushed on, and reached Akasheh soon after eight. Here we found our colleagues in a state of wretched discomfort in a miserable and dusty corner, designated for our use as the correspondents' camp—the first of many superior, but, I think, few worse ones. Nobody, however, except the Sirdar and one or two of his staff, was much better off, and as it was a mere temporary base for the advance, there was nothing to grumble about. Though no notice had yet been given, it was an open secret that we were to advance on Ferket very shortly, and on the 6th we were at last ordered to be ready to start at four in the afternoon for a night march.

I had bought another horse from Colonel Trombi, the Italian Military Attaché, but he was an undersized and wretched little animal, and I only had the grey really to rely upon. Just before lunch one of the newly-joined young officers asked if any of us could lend him a horse to parade on, as otherwise he would not be allowed to join his regiment. Nobody else responding, I offered mine, devoutly hoping that he would not be able to accept the *sine quâ non* condition that I must have it back in camp at three. However, he jumped at the chance, and after passing inspection all right, returned me the nag, and marched gaily all night and into action next morning. The actual distance from Akasheh to Ferket would probably not be more than sixteen or seventeen miles, but twelve hours only brought us to Sarkamatto, where we left the mountains behind us, and had the village of Ferket still four or five miles ahead.

The place assigned to the correspondents in the march was right at the tail, in the rear of the Third

Brigade after ammunition and hospital camels, but we were not very strictly confined to it, and as soon as the column once was on the move we were allowed to go backwards and forwards as we pleased. A night march is pleasant enough under some conditions, but not when strict silence has to be observed, and when the road is full of boulders and pits, and has to be negotiated by heavily laden camels, mules, and horses. I had not seen any of my own animals since the early afternoon, but I trusted to Providence in their turning up later, as they eventually did. The First Brigade got into its camp at about nine in the evening, being of course free to make its own pace; but the end of the long column only reached its destination after midnight, and all baggage animals were stopped outside the Sarkamatto Pass. Here, accordingly, I went to search for my lost ones, which after a long and weary quest I at last discovered, or rather had discovered for me by Major Griffiths, generally known as "the Friendly," which he certainly proved to be on this occasion. The only others I saw on that night were the two Brigadiers, Macdonald and Maxwell, perpetually riding backwards and forwards and closing up the column, and poor Roddy Owen, who was also on some such duty. When I had recognised my camels, I told the groom to hold the horse and give him a small feed whilst I tried to snatch half an hour's sleep; but hardly had I lain down when I found the First Brigade moving off, and thought it best to mount again. As it grew light I found myself alongside the 13th Battalion, and soon after heard the first shot. For a while the firing was very feeble, and we began to think the dervishes had cleared out; but it was not long before the action began in earnest, both in the hills and down by the river. It was really a pretty sight, though I confess to feeling something almost akin to pity for the wretched foe, who were caught like rats in a trap. The desert column of cavalry and camel corps came up simultaneously with the river column, and there was scarcely any chance whatever of escape except for the well mounted. These, however, very easily distanced

their pursuers, the leaders of the fugitives having gone through Suarda, as we afterwards learnt, by noon on the same day, whereas the cavalry only arrived there on the following morning.

The battle was so thoroughly described and illustrated at the time, that it would be idle to say much about it. As soon as it was over, of course, our servants and the few camp followers in general attempted to loot as much live stock, camels, and especially donkeys and goats, as they could. For the time being Major Roddy Owen was in charge of the live loot, and as I rode past he laughingly asked if I would not like a fine moke or two, as he had plenty to spare. My first business, however, was to find the Censor and despatch my "local urgent" telegrams. I forgot to mention that a new regulation had been put in force, whereby no telegram was to exceed two hundred words in length, but any number of such telegrams might be sent marked 1, 2, 3, and so on. All number 1's would go before any number 2, supposing they were paid at the same rate, but of course the *urgent* had preference. With the exception of one of my colleagues, the *local urgent* system was known only to myself, and consequently I lay down and wrote out three full-length wires all *local urgent*, had them censored, and despatched them all at once by the groom. I wanted him to ride one of the camels, but he said he would take the horse, though the saddle had not been off his back since two o'clock on the preceding afternoon. Not only did he hand in the telegrams at Akasheh early in the afternoon, but was back again at Ferket that same evening. The pony was slightly off his feed that night, but was all right the day after, which shows what good little beasts the ordinary Egyptian mounts are. As soon as I had sent off my telegrams I felt that I had earned a rest, if I could by any possibility create an opportunity of taking one. Before even repose, though, there came the need of a wash, as, between dust and sweat, we were all in a condition little better than sweeps. A violent wind was of course blowing, driving up the sand in "devils" and

clouds, and the heat was terrific. Whilst visiting the hospital my whisky bottle had been stolen out of my holster, and I was altogether rather badly off for material comforts; but the thought that my despatches at anyrate were well on the way to Akasheh comforted me to a certain extent. What had become of my colleagues I did not know—nor, to tell the truth, did I care much, as I made a bee-line for the river. The nearest water I struck was a small pool left by the retreating Nile, semi-stagnant, and not over inviting, perhaps, but at anyrate free from dead dervishes, so that it was not long before I was wallowing in its rather slimy depths as happy as an Egyptian buffalo. When I had washed off some of the caked sand and dirt I came out, and having no towel, sat on a rock and dried myself in the fierce sun, after which I sought the best shelter I could discover for a nap. It must be remembered that few of us had slept since two nights before, and even then very badly—in fact, as far as I was concerned, I had hardly had six hours of very second-rate slumber in three days and nights. I therefore resisted all the entreaties of my cook to make me a meal, and stretching up a blanket over some palm shoots to keep off the heat, I had an hour or more of delicious sleep, spite of flies and dust. At about two, though, I was roused by finding the Headquarter camp already on the move south. Though I could easily have done with another three or four spells of snooze, I did not care to be left behind, and so mounted my little red camel and started for the new camp. After all it was more or less a false alarm, and only the Sirdar and one or two of the principal staff pitched their tents beyond Ferket village. But I was only too glad to get away from the filth and flies and dust of the battlefield, and to be able to lie down in a comparatively clean roost, and above all a quiet one. The only other individual anywhere near me in the new camp was young Doctor Spong, who was even more tired than I. We warmed up a tin of rations and ate it with relish, after which he lent me a candle and retired to his tent. I sat out for an hour or so

in the open writing up an account of the day's proceedings, and then by eleven o'clock lay down under a bush and had one of the most delicious night's rest a man could wish for. Next morning I was up at six and round at Colonel Wingate's, where I found Brigadier-General Maxwell. I showed them portions of my letter to the *Standard* and my sketch map, and posted the lot in the Sirdar's special bag, which was then being made up, and was carried away by special camel at eight. I mention this to show the uncertainties and vicissitudes of a correspondent's work. I had sat up late at night after two or three very tiring days, and was the only correspondent with the advanced camp on the night of the fight, and the only one whose letter was despatched that morning. Yet a colleague who went back to Akasheh on the morning of the 7th was able to send his letter in from there, so as to reach London nearly a week before mine, although the Akasheh post was supposed to be kept waiting for the Sirdar's bag. It was one of those inexplicable and rather heartbreaking accidents which are never accounted for, and which often go so far towards making or marring a man's work. Curiously enough, my account of the only other real action fought, namely at Hafir, though also the first posted, never reached London at all, the boat containing it and other mail bags being the only one out of hundreds which was sunk in crossing the river.

After posting my letter and writing out three more telegrams, which I sent in by an Ababdeh Arab of the Intelligence Department, I was treated to breakfast and a bath by my hospitable Censor, after which I took it very easy until my colleagues began dropping in throughout the day. Our camp on this occasion was next that of the Intelligence and Headquarters, and was not by any means an uncomfortable one, though we could have done with a little more room. As we were certain to stay some time at Ferket, my stable companion, Sheldon, and I decided to build a really commodious *tukul*; and with the help of various fatigue parties we constructed one after Sheldon's artistic design, which was as good a

substitute for a house as could be needed. Now and again a more than usually violent sandstorm would annoy us, but our *tukul* gave us good cool shade as a rule, with plenty of air, being built right on the high level shore of the river, and sheltered by half a dozen palms whose trunks were incorporated in our walls.

The *tukul* is an enormous improvement on the tent, and throughout the campaign we never used our canvas except for our servants and for kitchen purposes. The huge double tents of the staff were habitable, it is true, though not nearly so cool as a good *tukul*; but an ordinary small single tent gave scarcely any protection from the grizzling heat, seeming rather to concentrate it while keeping out such breaths of air as occasionally stirred. The *tukul* is built of good stout boughs, planted in the sand and interlaced above, whilst the walls and roof are made of plaited grass and palm leaves. The Egyptian soldiers are all adepts at *tukul* building, and no difficulty was ever made about giving us a fatigue party of ten or more men, who were remunerated at the rate of about a sovereign for a small tent or more for a larger one, which they could build, if they had the materials handy, in the course of an hour or two. In less than a week the whole of the troops were housed more in *tukuls* than otherwise, and some of the quarters of the officers commanding battalions were absolutely sumptuous, with grass walls half a foot thick, double doors, and flap windows, so that never a fly found his way into the discreet and cool half-darkness which reigned within. The only reflection that forced itself upon me was that the time would inevitably soon come when there would at anyrate be no more palm leaves, even if any grass remained to plait the *tukul* walls and ceilings. Perhaps, though, before the supply was exhausted, a new era would have dawned for the province of Dongola, and there would be no more need for temporary dwellings like *tukuls*.

Altogether we stayed at Ferket camp up to the 4th of July, when it was beginning to get rather foul, and the Sirdar ordered a move to Kosheh. Seeing that nearly a

thousand dervishes must have been buried not so very far from our lines, we risked a good deal in staying so long. Directly after the fight, burying parties were set to work, with orders to make no graves within a thousand yards of the river, for fear of contaminating the water. The mass of the killed were of course in and round the village, and these were tied together and dragged off by mules to the trenches prepared for them, ten or a dozen at a time. The corpses, however, that lay far away up on the hillside were mostly left alone, and soon dried up into a quasi-mummified condition, where several remained for months afterwards, lying alongside the new railway line.

The month we spent at Ferket was on the whole rather a festive one, and there was scarcely an evening when the correspondents' camp was not the scene of a dinner-party, followed by a "sing-song," with banjo accompaniments by Seppings Wright or Sheldon, who were both artists on the string as well as on paper. There was also a little shooting to be done for those who had the energy, and I used to shoulder my gun at least three times a week and go after the geese, sand-grouse, and turtle doves, the latter being far the best in the pot. When first we arrived at the new camp the wild geese kept us awake with their quacking, but a very short British occupation sufficed to put them on their guard, until the Sirdar issued an order that no guns were to be fired within a certain radius of the camp. Thereupon the sportsmen went farther afield, and the geese, quickly recognising the immunity, returned to quack and rear their broods under our noses.

There was also an island a mile or two away, which could be reached by easy knee-deep wading, where there lived a score or two of very long-eared and nimble desert hares. These also grew desperately shy, though, after a few shots, and it was too hard work really to beat them out systematically under the broiling sun.

Luckily the very day fixed for moving to Kosheh our anxiously expected boats arrived from Sarrass, where they had been kept up till then by the low Nile, and

had, in fact, only managed finally to pass the cataracts by great exertions. Our new pitch at Kosheh looked very nice and clean in comparison with Ferket, and we set to work forthwith to construct our *tukuls*, and to make ourselves comfortable. As soon as mine was up I started off in my felucca to sail up to Suarda, to visit the camp there. It was, however, not a pleasant trip altogether, as I was seized with something very like cholera, and could not enjoy myself much. Luckily I had a good supply of champagne on board, and on the afternoon when I felt the worst, I rigged up a bed under a shady tree, and opening a magnum, kept myself alive till sunset, when I was lifted on board, and fell asleep whilst we drifted down stream back to Kosheh.

Hardly had I returned there when cholera broke out, the first two cases occurring in the Tenth Battalion, encamped alongside us, the men being seized at nine in the morning and buried at noon. The Nile was now rising in green flood, gradually covering ground hitherto exposed, and of course polluted with every kind of filth, so that the water was doubly poisonous with the essence of the "*sudds*" or decaying grasses near the Equator and with the impurities it found below. One of the first things to be done evidently was to move the men away from the river, and prevent both further contamination of the water, as much as possible, and the use of the water near the edges. Orders were therefore given for everybody to leave the edges of the river, and establish themselves at least a mile away in the desert, whilst all water for drinking or cooking purposes was to be drawn either from a deep pool called the Black Rock Pool or by means of boats from midstream.

I fancy that none of us will easily forget the morning when the whole river camp was struck. The first sight that met us at dawn was a dead body lying close to one of our kitchen tents. It was that of a Berber camp follower. In General Lewis' camp on our left, and amongst the Tenth on our right, several men had already succumbed, and the horrible sounds of vomiting and groan-

ing were all around us. Then one of our own servants was knocked over and carried off to the hospital to die, and we made what haste we could to shift away from the death-dealing Nile. It was difficult to get the usual fatigue party, and though we were pretty well packed and ready to go in the early morning, nobody came to us till six in the evening, when five men of the *hemleh* or transport arrived with ten camels to pull down our *tukuls*, which were now of considerable value, as all building material in the near vicinity was exhausted. These unfortunate fellows had just marched in from Akasheh, some seventeen miles, had gone up to the extreme end of the camp to the Ninth Battalion to report themselves, and had then been sent down to us as a fatigue. Neither they nor their camels had had anything to eat all day, and they had scarcely a rag to their backs, yet they made no complaint, but merely asked what was wanted. We gave them a good meal, and they at once set to work with the heartiest will. Sufficient praise was probably never given to this branch of the E.A., which had some of the hardest and most disagreeable work, no glory, and very little consideration paid to it. The men of the *hemleh* were generally in tatters and perpetually at hard labour with their camels, yet a merrier, more good-tempered lot of fellows it would be difficult to find, and both they and their officers were extremely popular.

Within a day or two the whole camp was attacked from end to end. A little green *tukul* was built as a hospital as far away as possible from other camps, though of course it had to be within easily reachable distance, and between it and the correspondents' quarters was the cholera cemetry, over which the loathsome vultures were continually hovering, hopping, and fighting, being really attracted by the refuse from the slaughter house, which was also emptied thereabouts — though their presence naturally seemed to associate itself with the burial-ground. There could be nothing like quarantine at all effectively established between different parts of the

camp, so that no attempt was made at anything of the kind. In this respect every station was free to do as its Camp Commandant and doctors wished. At Akasheh, for instance, the strictest quarantine was observed, but in the end the epidemic got in there very badly. In our Kosheh camp we were free to go where we pleased, and visited the cholera hospital and the various messes and regiments indifferently.

On the 28th July, when we had already had about ten days of this rather gruesome existence, we heard that some stores had arrived at railhead, the other side of our old Ferket camp. As we were running short, and there was sure to be some competition for anything eatable and drinkable, Gwynne, Knight, Sheldon, and I started off for an early morning ride to try and secure a share in the booty. On the way we met Surgeon-Colonel Gallwey, the P.M.O., and Surgeon-Major Trask galloping along apparently in a great hurry. Even the usually cheery Gallwey only answered our chin-chin with a nod instead of an Irish joke, and Trask followed his example. Before we reached railhead we saw Fenwick superintending an advanced working party opposite the ruins of Ferket village in a cloud of stifling sand, and he told any of us who liked to stay to breakfast with him.

When we at length rode up to the engineers' camp the sentries would not at first allow us to pass, but at the end we prevailed on them to show us Fenwick's quarters. Gwynne and Sheldon went back at once, but Knight and I thought we would wait a little for some breakfast, as it was already very hot, and we had ridden the six or seven miles at a gallop almost the whole way. I remember taking a long swill from a *goulah* or water jar, which I very seldom did, unless I had myself superintended its boiling, and I also remember a qualm afterwards when in answer to my question I found that Fenwick never boiled his water, poor fellow.

When he came in, tired and covered with dust and sand, we sat down to porridge and tea. He had only two plates, cups, and spoons, so that Knight and Pritchard

used one and Fenwick and I the other. I had not been very fit for several days past, and so when Knight said he should return immediately he had finished, I thought I should prefer to smoke a cigarette or two and have a rest. Fenwick then had a short conference with the Egyptian commander of the battalion then employed at railhead, the Seventh, I think, as to the measures to be taken with regard to cholera, which had broken out violently that morning as soon as the men had reached the river. For a month past they had been working in the desert without a case, but as soon as they came within touch of the poisoned water it began. Another almost indisputable cause was the disinterment now and again of the dervishes who had been lightly buried six weeks previously, often in the path of the railway. That very morning one corpse had been turned up, and one of the soldiers working there was seized almost immediately with cholera, and died in three hours.

When Fenwick had completed his orders, he too said he was tired and would turn in, but would like me to take a letter in to Headquarters a little later. I waited about an hour, and then going into his tent asked him for his note, but he replied, in a very suspiciously thin voice, that Pritchard had sent it already by a special orderly. I asked him how he felt, but he declared that he was all right, only a little knocked up by the sun. Poor fellow! within two hours he was dead! Looking in on Pritchard, he gave me another note for Colonel Rundle, but said that as he had already sent in there was no need for me really to trouble.

So I mounted and rode out of that cholera camp to go back to our own. About two miles out I met Dr. Spong, one of the hardest, and hardest-working army doctors I have ever met; and that is saying a good deal, for none of them are shirks, and I have met many. He asked me briefly where I had come from, and I told him from Fenwick, who seemed sick. He said he was going out to see him in answer to a note from Pritchard, and on he went.

As this was one of the very hottest days we had, I halted half-way to have refreshment with the officers of the Second, and then rode on to give my note to Rundle about noon.

A lunch of bread, thin soup, and weak brandy and water, and a short snooze, took me on to three in the afternoon, when on going some rounds I heard that both Trask and Fenwick were dead. These were the first of our friends who went, and a great gloom was spread over the whole of the Kosheh force, though it was in none too cheerful spirits before. One of our own colleagues, Mr. Garrett, had been sent down to Halfa in an almost hopeless condition, and another, Atteridge, had broken down altogether and also left the field. We who were left, though, did our best to keep up our own spirits and those of our comrades in misfortune, and there was scarcely a night when the correspondents' tables were not graced with a few uniforms, and their camp did not echo to the sounds of the banjo and such songs as "Sweet Marie," "On the road to Dongola," "The Year of Jubilee," "Could I only be sure that nobody else," and many more.

On the whole our days were pretty well filled. The first duty in the morning was water fatigue, which we took in turn. This consisted in superintending the filling of all the waterskins for the day's needs. The "officer of the day" had to assemble the camels at about five, slung round with their *gerbehs*, and send them down to where the boats were moored. The boats also took it in turn to row out into midstream and fill the skins. Both the camel drivers and the sailors hated this job, but it was absolutely necessary to insist upon and see that the water was taken from far out.

When in camp all that for drinking purposes was first cleared with alum, or, equally well, with a handful of beans, and then boiled, and that for baths was merely cleared.

By seven o'clock breakfast would generally be finished and the rounds would begin—terminating at about ten, or half-past, usually in the Intelligence tent for a chat

with Colonel Wingate and Slatin, and to get the day's telegrams censored. A more urbane and fair-minded Censor no correspondents ever had, and with the exception of the C.I.C. everybody with whom the Press was brought in contact on this campaign "did" them right well. In saying this about Sir H. Kitchener, I do not do so in any spiteful or malicious spirit,—nor would it affect him in the slightest if this were so,—but I merely put on record the fact that except actually when fighting was going on he treated us with very scant consideration and courtesy, and seemed to look on us as perhaps necessary evils in the eyes of others, but in his own simply as evils and quite unnecessary. I daresay if a correspondent were a General he would be of the same way of thinking, but as long as he is a "special" he is apt to kick a little against too much snubbing and restrictions.

Slatin Pasha was very popular with us, and I think was never happier than when he could escape from his official surroundings and pay us a visit or dine with us. His good-humour and merry spirits never seemed to fail him, and it was difficult to believe that this was the man who had been thirteen years a slave of the Mahdi, during several of which he had trotted beside his master's horse chained hand and foot. He used laughingly to say that he was twenty-two or twenty-three years old, because the years of his captivity did not count in his life; and he certainly almost bore out the joke in his appearance. It was extraordinary, too, to see how small were his feet and hands after walking barefoot for years and being employed in hard manual labour.

From the day we left Halfa until the end of the campaign there was hardly a morning that we did not spend an hour or two in the Intelligence tent, so that it may be imagined how really warm a friendship was created between the correspondents and the Censor and his Pasha, not to mention several other members of that department, such as Smyth of the Bays and the Italian Attaché, Colonel Trombi. Amongst the company officers, too, we had some great chums—so many, in fact, that it

would be misleading to mention any in particular; and there was, I think I may say, not a regimental or departmental mess where a correspondent could not almost consider himself as an honorary member.

Our new camp lay between the Tenth Soudanese, which was the last out in the desert, and the Third Egyptian pitched slightly higher than we were, with the cemetery below us. Farther on was the Ninth Soudanese.

The Tenth was commanded by Colonel Sydney, since killed at Abu Hamed, with Prendergast as senior company officer; Fitzclarence, also of the Tenth, and also killed at Abu Hamed, was then acting as Provost Marshal. The Third was under "Jim" Sillem, who, though an excellent officer and good company enough when he chose, was not perhaps as fond of society as most of his brothers. The Ninth was under Colonel Hackett Pain, generally known as the "Old Officer," with whom were two youngsters, Ravenscroft and Hoskins, usually called the big and the little Binbash, as smart juniors as you could find in any army. But I am already beginning to run through names of old friends and must stop, or it would take too long.

When the cholera was on the decrease I went down to Halfa for a day or two with Seppings Wright for a change of air and to eat a good meal in the mess. Our experiences on this little trip would make almost a chapter by themselves, especially our quarantine at Akasheh; but I only mention our having gone to show that we could sometimes get away for a short spell. It was about this season, the beginning of August, that extraordinary storms of dust and rain, such as had not been known for years in the Soudan, commenced with frequency and violence. Our *tukuls* were repeatedly blown down about our ears and all our belongings scattered over the desert or washed away down the nullahs to the Nile. They would generally begin with a succession of dust "devils"—then a tremendous gust or two of wind, a lull, and a low grey bank of cloud on the horizon, which, in less than five minutes sometimes, would be on us like a waterspout. In a quarter of an hour rivers a yard or more deep would be racing

down the hills and across the desert, and small lakes forming wherever the ground was flat or depressed. The misery to the camp of these storms cannot be described if it can be imagined, but there was generally the consolation of immediate fine weather succeeding—indeed the hurricane and rain seldom lasted more than an hour.

One of the worst of these was at Amara after the Gymkhana Meeting organised by Sparkes Bey and his cheery subs of the Fourth Egyptian Battalion. It was, by the bye, at this meeting that I certainly was in more danger of my life than at any previous or subsequent moment of the campaign. It was in the Bitchee-Watchee Race, in which the horse which comes in last wins, and everybody rides some other gee than his own. As a rule the entries consist of the slowest old crocks to be had. I entered my "Cow" with a certainty, which was not upset, of his coming in last, but Sparkes thought it would be a joke to enter what was known as his "Spunky Horse"—a runaway brute with no mouth, who was bad to ride at any time. As the race was to be ridden bareback and without whip, and the horses were to be led to the post and only mounted when the word "Go" was given, it was clear that whoever had "Spunky Horse" to pilot would have his work cut out for him. He fell to me. The others were already well on their way before I could climb on to his back, and then with a couple of prodigious bounds he started in pursuit. I need not attempt to describe the race nor my feelings of terror as I felt him start, nor of relief when I succeeded at last in pulling him up. I would willingly have paid ten pounds, or more, not to have tried the experiment, but such is the foolishness of human nature that I was ashamed to confess that I should like somebody else to have that particular horse to ride. At anyrate, it all ended well. We had, too, some good steeplechasing all won by Colonel "Robert" Adams—now with a V.C. won in India, together with young Viscount Fincastle, who saw his first shot fired also during this campaign in the first cavalry skirmish at Akasheh, directly after which he had to go home invalided. Camel-racing

was another feature of this meeting, the principal event being a match between one of Gwynne's Kabbabish telegraph runners and the champion of the Camel Corps. Gwynne's man was a regular character, Gummah by name, and the most atrocious-looking ruffian ever seen. He possessed a very fine camel, though, which few but himself would or could ride. The course was about half a mile. The Camel Corps man started off at a gallop, whilst Gummah kept his beast at the orthodox trot, rather than break which I believe he would have lost the race. The army champion jumped off with a slight lead but did not increase it, and when about half the distance had been completed he ran out of the course, leaving Gummah to finish alone.

We had a very festive dinner, I remember, followed by the usual "sing-song," lasting till near midnight. We had not undressed long, though, before a fearful and choking duststorm began, and then came such rain as one seldom sees, which lasted till sunrise instead of the usual half or full hour. Most of us, between the exertions of the gymkhana and the excitement of the big dinner, were considerably in want of the rest which we could not get through the storm, and it was a sorry show we made at early breakfast next morning. One of us was really too bad to sit on a horse, so I lent him my easy-going camel, on which I had ridden out, and myself took his nag back to Kosheh, where we arrived at about nine, to find half the place under water.

Altogether we stayed at Kosheh up to the 11th of September, the latter part of our sojourn being enlivened slightly by the advent of Captain Colville and his navy men, to put together the new gunboat, of which great things were expected. The Nile, too, rose fast, and it was getting more healthy, though not perceptibly cooler to any extent. Then came the order for the First Brigade to march across the desert to Suarda. This was always put down to the Sirdar as one of the grossest and most gratuitous mistakes of the campaign. The problem was to move from Kosheh towards Dongola, and the first place

where anything like a dépôt was formed was at Suarda or at Dulgo, a little farther south. It would have been comparatively easy and comfortable for the men to have kept along the banks of the river the whole way, where they would have had plenty of now clean fresh water and the benefit of shady camps ; but for reasons of his own, which we, at anyrate, could not discover at the time (nor have I ever done so since), Sir H. Kitchener decided on making a desert march to Dulgo, or rather to Absarat, with a water dépôt half-way out in the desert. This dépôt was formed and kept up with great labour by camel caravans taking out the water every other day, and the precious liquid was stored in large tin or zinc boxes lying out by the side of the track. Then the First Brigade went out in a pelting shower of rain at about four in the afternoon and soon found themselves obliged to wade across nullahs up to their knees. This was followed at night by a hot duststorm, and a very large number of the men fell out, many of them returning to camp and using language which would have possibly astonished the Sirdar, at having been sent out that way. I believe as a matter of fact more than a third of the brigade failed to reach Absarat next evening, and a good many were lost. My own recollection of that march is one of the most ghastly of the whole campaign. We left the old Kosheh camp with its varied associations, good and evil, at about three on the afternoon of the 11th, being almost the last to do so, the whole of the army having been forwarded before we correspondents were allowed to move. It was quite a relief to turn our backs at last on the deserted waste of *tukuls*, only a few down at the *Nuzul* being still inhabited. We had all sent our boats up before us, and rode camels or horses as the fancy took us. We reached the first water dépôt at about eight in the evening, after nearly losing our way several times, and were very hospitably received by Captain Tudway of the Camel Corps, who was in charge. The water, however, was so hot that it was painful even to the hands, and quite undrinkable until it had been cooled for at least an hour in bottles. It may be

imagined what the men must have felt on arriving thirsty at such a dépôt. We could not afford to rest very long, so after a short sleep on the sand we were off again soon after midnight, and reached the second water dépôt at about six in the morning, but not before we had picked up and rescued from certain death several stragglers from the last regiment, which had passed that way the day before—the last of these wretched men being watched hungrily by a vulture sitting by his side not a mile from the water. But all this was described at the time in the papers and pictured in the "illustrateds," so that it would be superfluous to retell the tale. We camped at this second dépôt till three,—at least two of my comrades, Pearce and Sheldon, did with me, the rest having pressed on earlier,—and took it comparatively easy in to Absarat, which we reached soon after seven, in time for dinner with Major Kitchener, the Sirdar's brother, and Captains Sherrer and Gage of the friendly *hemleh*. The Sirdar himself was on board one of the gunboats moored a little higher up, and in the middle of dinner sent for his brother. When the Major returned we heard that an accident had happened to the *Zafir*, the new gunboat from which such great things were expected, and that she was not expected to take part in the attack on Dongola. This was a great blow to everybody, after the desperate hard work which had been expended on this object, and the Major said that he had never seen his brother so upset, and that nobody had even mentioned the subject. We slept at Absarat that day, and rode on to Dulgo on Sunday the 13th, finding the whole camp struck and the rearguard of the Ninth marching out as we trotted in at about five in the evening. All our colleagues had gone on, and Sheldon thought best to keep up with the army; but Pearce and I preferred to take a decent night's rest, being confident of easily catching up the camp at Ferreig next evening. On the 19th we left Kabbodi before dawn, went, rather to our surprise, through Abu Fatmeh without a shot being fired, and occupied Kerma at 6.30. We could, however, see the enemy at Hafir on

the opposite bank; so bringing up some small field-guns we commenced shelling them from our side, whilst two or three gunboats performed the same operation from the river. Whenever either of these tried, however, to pass the narrowest part of the stream, it met such a hot reception from one or two dervish guns and from the rifle pits along the shore that it was forced to retreat. There were comparatively few dervishes visible, all that could be seen being the puffs of smoke from the pits and mud embrasures. Our fire dismounted their guns time after time, but with great coolness and adroitness they were always set up again with very short delay. This action of Hafir demonstrated most clearly the immense protective value of thick mud walls, into or through which the shells went, destroying perhaps a foot square but leaving the rest intact. I know that various estimates were made, but my own was that there were not more than four hundred dervishes fighting the Egyptian Army and gunboats at Hafir; and had it not been from a fear of the Egyptians getting at their families higher up, when once the gunboats had succeeded in forcing the passage, I believe these four hundred could have held the pits almost indefinitely. The Maxims alone fired four thousand rounds, and I forget how many shells were delivered from the shore and the steamers besides rifle fire; yet it is not at all sure that any dervishes at all were killed, and it was never claimed, I fancy, that their loss exceeded three or four.

The final passage of the narrow gut was somewhat exciting, as an unlucky dervish shell at that short range—less than five hundred yards—would certainly have sunk any of the gunboats. Several of them went very close, and one actually struck the water and ricochetted straight over the ship. It was the rifles from the pits, however, which were the most dangerous, and it was by a bullet from these that Captain Colville was hit in the wrist. The Sirdar and staff and the Press watched the Hafir fight for about four hours through their glasses as comfortably as if from an opera box, and it was felt when the gallant steamers were once out of dervish range, that Dongola was practically

won. This proved to be the case, and the clasp for "Hafir" instead of "Dongola" shows that it was there that the decisive action was fought. The next day was spent in the herculean task of ferrying the army across the Nile in full flood. This may not have been a very brilliant feat to watch, but in reality it was one of the finest pieces of work in a campaign which was conspicuous for such feats. On the 21st we were ready for the final move, and early on the morning of the 23rd the huge column moved out. By ten o'clock we were marching quietly through Wad Bishara's deserted Dehm, and soon after eleven we were in the old town of Dongola, and had once more raised the Egyptian flag over the ruined Government House. This ended the first chapter of the story of the recovery of the Soudan. At the time of writing these words—March 1898—we are daily expecting the news of a big fight, the last, probably, before the Armageddon at Omdurman, where the Khalifa may be expected, if ever, to make his final stand. I have only sketched very cursorily the barest outlines of the Dongola Expedition from a correspondent's point of view, since generally we of the Press are prohibited from taking our own standpoints, and I thought it might interest some of the public to hear how their news is provided for them. Even thus the chapter has exceeded its proper dimensions, and I refrain from any further observations or criticisms, military or political, on the Soudan campaigns past and proceeding and to come.

CHAPTER XII

AT the very beginning of 1897 it was tolerably clear to all who were watching with knowledge the course of events in Crete that matters would soon reach a crisis in that unhappy island. I myself had wished to go there in January, but various other matters combined to detain me until the town of Canea had been partially fired and the ships had bombarded the Akrotiri insurgents. We may later consider the historical and political aspect of the Cretan question, but for the present I will confine myself to describing my own personal experiences during six weeks or so preceding the declaration of war. As I have by me a brief diary kept at the time, I can scarcely do better than transcribe it, with such additions as recur to my memory as I write.

"1897—*February 25th.*—Reached Athens at 6.30 a.m. Transhipped luggage at once to the *Medea*, and then ashore. By the roundabout little railway up to town. To Hotel Grande Bretagne, where found Bourchier more or less directing the affairs of the nation. Also H. Norman similarly engaged. Dined at *table d'hôte*, where saw Dimitroff the Bulgar, and Nobili. Back on board at 9.30. Cannot say that I was struck with any great display of excitement concerning the doings of Vassos or the fate of Crete."

"*February 27th.*—Got to Candia at dawn. At seven o'clock went to call on the *Trafalgar*, but Captain Grenfell already out. On shore to our Vice-Consul—a Greek with a great idea of his importance; perhaps, however, due as much to his wealth as to his position, he being reputed the richest man in Candia, if not in Crete. At his house met a bulbous-nosed secretary to Shefki Bey, the Governor. Town seems quiet enough, though only

five hundred Christians to forty thousand Moslems. Seems, however, that fighting had been going on the day before, and this was occasion Grenfell's visiting Governor.

"Before steamer left, old General of Division, Mustapha Pasha, came board to take Canea command. Reached Rethymo early in afternoon, but didn't go ashore. Left again about midnight."

"*February 28th.*—Canea at dawn. Very pretty as seen from the sea. All the background formed snow-covered heights, Ida chain. Ominous little wreaths smoke rising, however, all directions. Landed about nine o'clock without any usual bother Customs. First thing to do find Biliotti. He at once took me round to Chermside and Bor, who was at the Marine Guard. Chermside came here on military commission, which having proved completely abortive, he is now hoping to go back to Constantinople. Bor used to command Cyprus Police. Now been named head of Cretan, or rather Canean, gendarmerie. Had lunch at Marine Mess, and after some sort of food in our new house, which agreed to take together with Scudamore for ten napoleons a year, strolled out again to Bor's to have a whisky and soda."

The state of Canea would have been ludicrous had it not been deplorable. Ninety-five per cent. of the Christian inhabitants had fled, locking up such of their goods as they were unable to carry away with them in their houses. There were no hotels and no accommodation for strangers. What had once been *the* hotel had been annexed by several members of the Consular Corps and their relations, who had broken into it and established a sort of *table d'hôte* of their own there. As a rule, all these officials live out at Halepa, but were ordered in by the ships as soon as hostilities commenced in earnest. The only one who objected to move, and remained outside Canea, was the Austrian, Baron Pinta. Sir Alfred Biliotti and M. Medana, the Italian, with their wives, had exchanged their comfortable Halepa villas for a poky room each in the Consular Hotel, where also lived Colonel and

Madame Ruggieri, the Italian Military Attaché, and Mr. and Mrs. Giraud. The French Consul-General, M. Blanc, lived in his consulate on the quay, as did the Russian, M. Demeric.

The British Consulate likewise was on the sea, next door to the Customs almost, but was a very rickety and disreputable old shanty, as, I regret to say, the foreign consulates of the lordly British Empire generally are in any at all out-of-the-way spot. The offices consisted of two very small and dusty rooms, with a few deal chairs and a couple of tables. A very dilapidated divan in Sir Alfred's den was visitors' accommodation. It was, however, convenient in some ways, as through the back window one could communicate with the signal men, who were always on duty on the roof of an adjacent ruin. Most of Sir Alfred's writing, however, was done in the common room of the Consular Corps at the hotel, where they generally met at least once a day to discuss the situation. Of course the most pressing need for me was to find a lodging, and our Consul consigned me to one of his acquaintances, who showed me several very uninviting rooms to be shared with other guests. In the course of our wanderings, though, I came across Scudamore, and we agreed to look out for a house for ourselves. Our *modus operandi* was simplicity itself. We first went on the quay, and asked any likely-looking individual we met if he did not know of a lodging, and then tried several of the principal streets in the same way. In a very short while we had a large number to select from. The fact was that the Christians were still suffering from panic, and dared not live in their own houses, which they were in daily fear of seeing looted or burnt. Consequently they were only too glad to find a European willing to occupy, being tolerably sure that as long as he was there no harm would come to the property. None of them asked or wished to take any rent or equivalent; but we insisted at anyrate on paying something, if only nominal, which would establish our title in case of future contingencies. The event proved that we had been wise in

our generation, for as soon as the panic wore off the proprietor wished to join us in our tenancy, and otherwise infringe our rights; but we declared that we were in undisputed and indisputable possession for a year, though of course we knew that a couple of months at the outside was likely to be the limit of our stay.

After the house came the question of servants. Real servants, of course, there were none, but we took on two cab-drivers out of work, and used them as best we could. They were naturally entirely ignorant of the ways of civilised life, but could do a certain amount of washing-up and fetching and carrying. A cook was beyond the dreams of avarice. We telegraphed both to Brindisi and Smyrna, offering ten pounds a month and passage both ways; but only one candidate would even bite at such an apparently tempting bait, and he changed his mind at the last moment. Our diet consequently soon reduced itself to a monotonous level. It consisted almost invariably of a leg or shoulder of mutton hot for dinner from the Turkish cook-shop, and cold for luncheon next day. Canean lambs are small, and there was never much, if any, left over. There were no potatoes, so we had an invariable but good salad of fresh lettuce and spring onions, dressed with perhaps the finest olive oil in the world. Dessert consisted of a dish of "yaourt" or clotted cream. Drink was decidedly scarce, and beer very bad; but we generally contrived to supply ourselves with whisky from one of the ships. Our first night in the new house was anything but peaceful. The mansion belonged to a wealthy Greek who had prepared it for his bride. It was furnished with some magnificence—large mirrors, a grand piano, table, and bed-linen galore, and everything requisite, down even to scented soaps, powder puffs, and curling-tongs. Whether the happy couple had ever inhabited it I know not. A few broken panes of glass, however, allowed free access for cats, hundreds, if not thousands, of which were roaming homeless and starving in the deserted streets and on the housetops; and of course as soon as we came in, the cats, scenting food and life,

came in after us. And the "gubs," as the night fiends may be called, I rarely saw so numerous and so ferocious. Luckily, a most excellent powder, or sort of sawdust, was on sale cheap, and I used to smother the whole of the bed and the surrounding floor with handfuls of this every night. We never succeeded, though, in thoroughly evicting these pests, in comparison with which the myriads of fleas sank into insignificance.

To return to events. "*March 1st.*—Morning up to Major Bor's office, where found gendarmes on strike for arrears of pay. On to Commission, where Chermside introduced me to Shereef ed Deen Pasha, also Osman Bey. Back to Consulate, where found deputation, Moslem notables, very much excited at news from Selino, where all Moslem inhabitants seem danger being massacred.

"Up again to Bor's private quarters on the Suda Bay road, where had lunch with him and Colonel Viallart, French Military Attaché."

"*Tuesday, March 2nd.*—Had lunch again with Chermside, and walked back with him to see Bor about the mutinied gendarmes."

What had happened was this. A certain number of the worst characters had incited the rest of the Albanian gendarmes to demand their arrears of pay, and to refuse to go on duty until they received them. They certainly had very considerable cause of complaint, many of them having been eighteen months without pay; but it was not a moment when insubordination could be permitted. Bor had made them several offers of paying a portion now and the rest later on, and many of the men would surely have accepted, but a few ruffians kept up the bad feeling. The day before they had refused to allow Suliman Bey, an Albanian himself and second in command under Bor, to leave the Konak, where he was still virtually a prisoner; and in view of the extremely serious position, Major Bor had reported to the Admirals, who had that morning held a council on the subject. The public feeling was already sufficiently excited, and the state of public order was not so satisfactory that insubordination amongst its supposed

guardians could be lightly viewed. After some discussion, the opinion of Major Bor prevailed, and was adopted—namely, that a last chance should be given to the men to accept the terms offered, and to trust the Government for better treatment in the future; and that if they refused, they should be forcibly disarmed and the ringleaders suitably punished. The means of executing this programme proposed by the Major was that detachments of the various international troops, marines, and sailors should quietly and unostentatiously be brought up to and surround the Konak, and, if necessary, proceed to the disarmament. It was scarcely to be expected that, in case of force becoming necessary, bloodshed could be avoided, but *carte blanche* was given by the Admirals. This was the subject of the after-luncheon conversation between Colonel Sir H. Chermside and Major Bor. The former had, of course, no administrative official position at that time, and could only offer his opinions. Whatever they may have been, they could scarcely then have influenced matters, as the whole business was cut and dried. In saying this, however, I must only be taken to mean that the necessary orders had been given to the various commandants of troops to be at the Konak at 3.30, very few, if any, outsiders having any idea of what was intended. Indeed, of all the officials in Canea, I suppose Sir A. Biliotti, Colonel Chermside, Colonel Ruggieri, Colonel Amoretti, and perhaps a couple of foreign gendarmerie officers, were all who knew anything of the proposed disarmament till within ten minutes of its being carried out. After the two soldiers had conferred, Colonel Chermside went back to his work and the Major to the Konak, whither I accompanied him, together with Mr. Hogarth, the author of the *Wandering Scholar*, acting as an amateur journalist and temporary correspondent of the *Times*.

Altogether we spent about an hour upstairs in Bor's room, chatting, as far as I was concerned, most of the time with Suliman Bey, who, though he did not then know the proposed measure, was confident of soon

bringing the mutineers to reason. Soon after three, Sir A. Biliotti and Colonel Viallart paid the Major a visit; the former being in the secret, the latter not. As soon as they were gone, taking with them one or two other officials who happened to be in the Konak, the Major came into his office with Captain Churchill, and told Suliman Bey of the plan. It was very simple. They were both to go downstairs, where the men had just finished dinner, and again appeal to their better feelings once or twice. If their arguments failed, Major Bor was to advance on to the doorstep and pass his handkerchief once or twice over his moustache. Upon this the bluejackets were to surround the doorway and call on the gendarmes to lay down their arms. If they resisted, they were to be disarmed by force at the point of the bayonet. The foreign troops were instructed not to use firearms without the word of command. Major Bor and Suliman Bey, followed by Churchill, went first downstairs, followed by Hogarth and myself. The staircase led into a broad basement hall about fifty or sixty feet long by perhaps twenty-five wide. It split into two as Eastern staircases generally do half-way, and each arm landed by the right and left walls. Off the hall opened four rooms used as refectories and dormitories. Both the hall and these rooms were full of refractory Albanians. The building was entered by a door, one leaf of which was always open, opposite the staircase.

When Hogarth and I had reached the last step we saw Bor and Suliman talking to some of the men, and I took out a sketch-book I had brought with me to try and jot down the scene. Scarcely, however, had I begun, when Bor walked leisurely to the porch and outside, and the next moment we saw the Italian marines rushing up to the door. At the head of them, so to speak, was the Gendarmerie Lieutenant, Cravieri, who seized the gendarme who was standing sentinel at the door. At the same moment Captain Helström, commanding the Russian sailors, who followed the Italians, burst into the room. Upon this one of the Albanians sitting in the middle of

the hall jumped and fired his rifle, probably at Cravieri, and his shot was followed by another from one of his comrades. These were immediately replied to by the officers with their revolvers and one or two of the sailors nearest the door. The mutineers then fired another few rifles, and a regular volley answered them, echoed by shrieks and groans. By this time the whole hall was full of smoke, two men were down almost at our feet, we were covered with plaster from bullets which had struck the wall about our ears, and the position was far from pleasant. If the battle was to continue our post was untenable, being even more exposed to danger from the point blank fire of the international troops through the door opposite us, than from stray bullets from the gendarmes. At the same time, if the Albanians held out it seemed scarcely likely that the sailors would be able to get in for some time, and we should have fallen easy victims. In any case, another volley through the door was not an inviting prospect, and we retraced our steps upstairs, one bullet coming through the ceiling just in front of us; but we had not been two minutes in Bor's office when we could see all was over, and so went down again. The spectacle in the hall was ghastly enough in all conscience, being like a butcher's shop and reeking with the smell of blood and powder. The place was, however, very soon cleared, all the rebellious police being led out between a file of the international troops, and told to throw down their arms before being made prisoners. The result of this absolutely necessary operation was most unfortunate, insomuch that Suliman Bey, who was equally liked by the Europeans and the Albanians, was the first to fall, and died in great agony in less than half an hour in one of the inner rooms. Three other gendarmes were killed and one or two wounded. Only one sailor was hit, in the hand. Of course hundreds of widely divergent opinions were expressed on this incident, both as to its causes, its expediency, and its results. There can, however, be little if any doubt that it was necessary to adopt stringent measures. The responsibility for the firing may be given

to the natural excitability of the Italian character, since orders were that the gendarmes were to be disarmed at the point of the bayonet. I heard the more phlegmatic Russians wondering why their Italian comrades had fired, and several of them answered my questions on the subject by saying, "We never fired a shot; we had orders not to." As to who shot Suliman Bey, everybody in Canea formed his own opinion. The generally circulated theory was that he was killed by one of his own men. At anyrate he died, poor fellow, in the execution of his duty, and that is the best death for a soldier. Seeing that it was my third day in Crete, I thought that things looked promising. On standing again at the foot of the staircase, I could count eight bullet marks which must have passed all within a foot of some part of the anatomy of the pair of correspondents. I need scarely say, however, that we did not get the Iron Cross for Valour awarded by King Humbert to several others, who, I believe, were never even inside the Konak. It was on this date (2nd March) that the Powers made their declaration of policy regarding Crete. *Pro memoriâ*, it may here be noted that in February Germany had stated that she was ready to back up any energetic measures which Europe might decide to take—the more energetic the better—to prevent the political brigandage evidently contemplated by Greece. To this England retorted that it was desirable to reassure Greece and the Greeks that under no circumstances would Crete ever revert to the domination pure and simple of Turkey, and that the island ought to be made into a "privileged province." After an interchange of views, the following two formulæ were proposed by Russia and accepted by the Concert.

Number one.—In no case could Crete, *under present circumstances*, be annexed by Greece.

Number two.—Crete should be endowed by the Powers with a full autonomous régime.

How this has been carried out history will show, but it is worth noting in its proper place and date that such a declaration was made by the Concert.

"*Thursday, March 4th.*—After usual round, went to lunch with Demeric and officer from the *Groziastchy*. Then had a passage on the Italian launch to interview the new Greek Admiral, Sakhtouris, on the *Hydra*. First went on board the *Stromboli*, then to the two Russians—the *Posadnik* and the *Nicolai II*. On board with us was a Greek journalist delegated by the Greek Vice-Consul to carry confidential communications to the new Admiral. He was very full of his own importance at first, but under stress of weather and sea was reduced to a state of complete limpness long before reaching the *Hydra*. On board the latter I saw Sakhtouris, who, however, evidently viewed the correspondent of the *Standard* with some suspicion, especially as the Vice-Consular Delegate had first seen him." (My sentiments regarding Greek action in Crete were already well known—in fact, out of about forty special correspondents for the British and European Press, I was at that time probably the only one who was—I will not say impartial, but not more or less rabidly Hellenophil. Perhaps I should except Hogarth, whose sympathies were, I think, nevertheless certainly Grecian.) "After a colourless interview, I tumbled again into the cockle-boat launch and back to the *Nicolai*, where I was given another launch to take me to *Barfleur*. Tea with Captain Mann, and then taken ashore by pinnace from *Camperdown*. To Consulate to see Biliotti. Writing telegrams. Cold dinner. Whisky and bed early."

"*March 5th.*—On going out at seven found Biliotti had gone in middle of night to Selino Kastel on *Rodney*. Wired to Captain Custance asking if any objection my following him, and to see Rees to ask if he could give me a steamer. Appears the *Edith* expected afternoon. Afternoon some French tourists arrived, together with Mr. Bernard Maimoun, a secret agent from Stamboul. Having nothing else to do, helped them to get rooms. Seems Maimoun has secret mission for Vassos from Yildiz. Did not appear altogether pleased at being recognised, though perhaps not quite sure whether I

know him. Dined with Rees and slept, or rather did not sleep, in his room, a prey to the insect creation in great force till 5.30 a.m., when *Edith* arrived. Got up and went straight on board at once."

The foregoing needs a word or two of explanation. The situation at Selino was very serious, and the Moslem inhabitants were in imminent danger of complete extermination. Their position was causing much anxiety to their friends and relations, and had been the subject of much deliberation by the Admirals. Several proposals had been made for mediation by the Consuls, but these gentlemen did not all of them relish the task of acting as intermediaries. Sir Alfred Biliotti alone urged the necessity of prompt action. His Russian colleague, M. Demeric, would have gone with him, but his French one objected to do so. Finally, in one way or another, it was decided to send him by himself on the *Rodney*. When the Consular Corps awoke next morning and found that he had gone, there was the usual cry of *perfide Albion*; but apart from the Russian, M. Demeric, who would have started at any moment, the others had no cause to complain, as they had already previously refused a joint action.

When I heard of the intended relief of Selino I calculated that no news would be likely to reach Canea for probably four days, and therefore if I could get a steamer for myself I might send a first wire on the second day back by my own steamer, and on the fourth day again return with special news gathered by myself on the spot. It was of course expensive, but the *Standard* never questions cost in such emergencies. On the 6th, accordingly, I weighed anchor at about five in the morning, and off we went. The *Edith* was a small coasting steamer of, I suppose, about four hundred tons, and directly we were fairly out at sea we began to have rather a bad time, as it was blowing hard. As we ran into Kissamo Bay, hugging the shore to escape the swell, we were overhauled by the *Scylla*. Twenty minutes before she had been barely visible on the horizon, but coming down at over twenty knots she soon hove us to.

On finding there was nobody and nothing on board but a war correspondent she was very disgusted, and somewhat sulkily gave us leave to proceed on our course. By this time the seas were breaking over the deck, and most of the crew were ill. I took up my position on the bridge, well wedged amongst the rails, and insisted on continuing, although the captain already wanted to turn back. By noon we were only approaching Cape Grabusa, when I had a cold chicken and a bottle of beer brought up for lunch, as it was unbearable below. I, and everybody else on deck, was now well soaked through, and it was blowing half a gale. When we rounded the Cape, though, the sea was worse still, and after holding on for about an hour, and making less than half a mile, I reluctantly gave the word to go back. We could not possibly have fetched Selino till the next evening, if we did so at all, and that would have been too late. So we turned round, and I got into Canea at about seven in the evening, figuratively with my tail between my legs, and not feeling very festive after thirteen hours spent on the bridge in bad weather. "After a hasty dinner glad to get to bed."

"*March 7th.*—Lunched at home. Dined with Rees. Attempt last night to blow up Turkish blockhouse. Great excitement, and Moslems threatening blow up Greek Consulate, which would not be bad thing. International ships all cleared out at sunset, being apparently afraid of being torpedoed by Prince George."

The blockhouse here alluded to was Malaxa, of which more anon. The Greek Consulate was almost next door to our own, and was a hotbed of intrigue and conspiracy of every imaginable kind. Not long after the Consul and his acolytes were forcibly expelled and the place shut up. The flight of the ships caused no little amusement and some jeering from the Græcophils. The new Admiral, Sakhtouris, was supposed to have come with some secret and mysterious instructions, and perhaps that may have influenced the Admirals. It was very clear, though, that they did not like the idea of torpedoes either from the *Hydra* or elsewhere, and that night Canea was left to itself.

"*March 9th.*—Morning took stroll round town and up to Chermside, where met Hogarth, and we all walked up hill to Turkish battery overlooking Halepa, which was engaged in an active duel with some insurgents opposite. Lunched Hogarth, and with him board *Barfleur*. Dined at home, then round to Consular Hotel."

At this time desultory firing was going on during most part of every day both at Akrotiri and in the neighbourhood of Malaxa. This blockhouse was perched on the summit of one of the ridges overlooking the Suda road, and had a garrison of about forty men, who had now been more or less blockaded for a month past. Their principal need was water, but the last mule convoy which attempted to revictual them was turned back by the insurgents with the loss of one or two men. I remember the scene when these corpses were brought back along the Suda road, and met about half a mile outside the town by crowds of the townspeople, amongst whom were many women, who at once began "keening" and tearing their veils. I myself had returned from a visit to one of the ships, and had been saluted with a stray bullet or two, fired from nearly a mile off, several times along the route.

It was on this day (March 9th) that the Greek Vice-Consul and two or three correspondents of the Athens Press, who were thinly disguised agitators more than journalists, were expelled from Canea by order of the Admirals.

The next day, on the 10th, the *Trinacria* arrived with the first batch of refugees from Selino. Almost the whole town turned out on the quays to welcome them, a large proportion being either old friends or close relations. The weather was very rough, and the landing was a task of no small difficulty. It was performed entirely by foreign men-of-war's boats, and the sailors seemed rather to relish the care of the veiled Moslem ladies, in the agonies of sea-sickness even.

It was not till Thursday the 11th that Sir Alfred Biliotti himself came back to tell the tale of the rescue. It is all old history now, but what was perhaps not

sufficiently shown at the time was the slenderness, so to speak, of the hair on which the lives of all concerned, not only the refugees but the relieving force, hung for several hours. The distance was at least fifteen miles from Selino to the sea, and the path was narrow, running between high hills on either side, lined with hundreds of insurgent riflemen. The little column had to march almost in Indian file, and would have been completely at the mercy of an attack. It was only owing, firstly, to the influence of Sir Alfred exercised on the leaders of the insurgents; and secondly, to his exertions, seconded by Mr. Bickford Smith, who happened to be on the spot as agent for the Relief Fund, in preventing any resistance or even show of resentment against the wholesale plunder that went on during the whole of the tramp down to the coast, that a ghastly massacre was averted. Afterwards Colonel Vassos claimed a merit which he had no shadow of a right to, for the rescue of the garrison, and the garrison, instead of being grateful for escaping with their lives, grumbled at having been robbed; but the real hero of the whole business was our venerable Consul. Of course the naval forces deserved great praise, but probably up to the present moment very few of those present have any idea how very near they several times were to their latter end, whereas Sir Alfred was perfectly cognisant of the danger, not only during its having to be faced but beforehand.

On the 14th our mess was joined by Mr. Bass, correspondent of the American *New York Journal*, an enterprising and determined colleague of the right sort. I spent most of this day cruising round the various ships in the harbour, having tea on the *Barfleur*, and dining in the wardroom of the Russian *Groziastchy*, after which ended up the evening with a quiet game of poker at the quarters of Melton Prior, who had lately arrived and established himself in another house on the quay.

"*March* 15*th*.—Up rather later than usual. Spent hour reading and collating reports from Italian Vice-Consul on atrocities at Sitia and Daphnes. Wrote out telegram on same. Lunch at Consular *table d'hôte*.

Afterwards heard of disaster in gun turret of the *Sissoi Veliky*, but too late to go to Suda. Seems thirty killed and wounded. Dined with Russian Consul, Demeric. To Prior's for smoke and whisky."

On the 15th, after the usual rounds, I drove down to Suda with Prior, being rather too stiff to walk or ride. This arose from my having bestridden a fast and rough-going pacing pony a day or two before on a very ragged saddle with stirrup irons which must have been made for a child, and which would not admit of my wide-welted soles. Consequently I had to do without the leathers, and lost plenty of skin in consequence, besides being jolted to death. On the *Sissoi Veliky* we were of course received with the usual courtesy, which I have always found extended by Russians to Englishmen; and not only were we shown over the whole ship, but Melton Prior was allowed to sketch the scene of the accident, and anything else which he wanted.

The Wednesday was fixed for the funeral of the victims, and the gunboat *Groziastchy* was put at the disposal of any distinguished foreigners who wished to attend. As there was plenty of wind most people elected to drive, as many as could secure carriages, of which the supply was still very limited; but the rest had to go by sea, and stand the roll and the swell as best they could. The ceremony was very imposing, taking place in a little cemetery bought and established by Sir A. Biliotti, close to the shore of Suda Bay. All the representatives, naval, military, and consular, of the six Great Powers and Turkey, together with local notables, were there in uniform and their own costumes, and the scene, both on board the *Sissoi Veliky*, where the eighteen coffins were arranged, covered with flower wreaths and crosses, and on the brink of the big trench dug to receive them all, was most impressive and unique. As we were leaving the ground, Captain Robertson of the *Revenge*, whom I had last seen two days before we entered Dongola, far up the Nile, asked several of us to lunch on the flagship, where we spent the rest of the afternoon in talking over old times

in Egypt, agreeing, I think, that, bad as it was, Crete was on the whole preferable to the Soudan.

The next three or four days were fairly quiet in Canea, the principal interest being centred in whether or no Turkey was going to war with Greece. When I arrived in Crete I found that we were quite destitute of any news from the outside world, except such as was afforded perhaps once a week by the arrival of the Austrian Lloyd steamer with the post. As it was almost necessary, for me at least, to know what was going on, I organised a private telegraphic service with Athens, by which I was to receive some items of the news of the world every day, and in return I sent Cretan news, which was equally welcome at Athens. I arranged for several Consuls and other officials to share the expenses, which, of course, were rather heavy, and this little system was continued as long as I remained on the island, to the great advantage of everybody concerned, though when it came to paying, I only encashed, I think, four pounds towards defraying the cost. It was, however, well worth my while, as I have always found that the best way to get news is to give it, and when you are known to be in possession of "the latest" you are always welcome, and stand a good chance of learning in return everything that there is to be given.

Things were already getting very mixed in Thessaly, and Scudamore left on the 19th, so that Bass and I were the remaining tenants of our lordly mansion, and most of the time I was alone, as Bass was for several days of every week up in the mountains or in the camp of Vassos, whither I did not care to accompany him, firstly, because I had plenty to do in Canea, and secondly, because I did not care to be under even the smallest obligations of hospitality to the leader of a party whose action I had consistently blamed, and which was daily offending against all my ideas of decency and right.

In the third week in March, Sir A. Biliotti and some of the other Consuls and residents ventured to reoccupy their villas in Halepa, and the Consular Hotel was broken up, and became the headquarters later on of some of the

Italian regiments. The condition of the village of Halepa would have been extremely comical had it not really been rather heartbreaking for the proprietors of houses and property there. Most of these had been turned inside out and looted, and even in Sir Alfred's garden a good deal of havoc had been made, whilst mournful sounds proceeded from a corner where two favourite cats had been tied up in a sack and left to starve unsuccessfully, their feline tenacity of life having enabled them to hold on till our arrival.

From this time onward, whenever I was in supposed residence at Canea, most of my time was spent either out at Halepa or at Suda, where the hospitable wardroom of the *Revenge* was always open, and gave me a welcome decent meal as a change from mutton and onions, not to speak of the best of good company, and, if I could manage to stay, a cot slung between decks, where, at anyrate, I was for one night able to sleep without fear of indefatigable bloodthirsty enemies. Now and again Admiral Harris would invite me to his table, but then I had to borrow kit all round, not having provided myself on leaving Constantinople with the garments of evening civilisation, whereas in the wardroom I was always made thoroughly welcome at any hour, and almost in any costume—a way they have in the army, and a way they have in the navy—at least so it has always been my good luck to find.

On the 24th March the Seaforths arrived at Canea, and having applied to Admiral Harris, I had no difficulty in getting a free passage on the *Clyde* transport, to accompany the regiment to Candia. In some respects it was fancied to be rather a ticklish experiment to land a European force at this spot, where almost if not half the original Moslem population of the island was then assembled; but the disembarkation came off all right, although there certainly was a critical moment, or rather about five critical minutes, when the first boatloads of the Highlanders reached the quays, and the population were not quite sure if, judging by the dress, they were not some new breed of Greeks in coloured petticoats, instead of the

usual white *fustanella*. Having spent the whole of the day in watching the landing of the regiment and rowing to and fro from the ship, I finally put on shore about twelve dozen of stout and soda and a great ham, all of which were great prizes in Crete, and betook myself to the Consulate, where M. Calocherino lent me a bed in one of his offices, in which I curled up, and was soon asleep, notwithstanding the repeated assaults of both light infantry and "heavies," whose marks I bore for days afterwards.

After a very early breakfast I was down by the sea next morning in time to see the Highlanders parade for inspection, by Shefky Bey, the Commandant of Turkish troops, whose garrison band then played our men through the town to their quarters just outside the ramparts. This was all over by about nine, after which a Dr. Ittar offered to take me to visit some of the refugees from Sitia and Daphnes, of whom we had already heard a good deal in Canea, and to see and interrogate whom personally was one of the chief objects of my coming to Candia. As most of these were Moslem women, it would not have been very easy to obtain access to them without the help of a doctor, but passing myself off as another of the fraternity no difficulties were made. The visits to these poor creatures took us up to nearly two o'clock. It would be useless now to repeat the stories they told, the most interesting of which I spent the afternoon in writing out for publication in the *Standard*, where they duly appeared —at least some of them—later on. One could not but be struck with the great beauty of the women and children, as well as with their patient resignation, only one of them seeming really to feel any strong resentment against their enemies. The Cretans are, in fact, so accustomed to violence that acts of brutality are looked upon as nothing at all out of the common, even when perpetrated on defenceless girls and babies. The good looks of these people, in contrast to the far plainer Christian folk, must probably be put down to the fact that the Moslems, having for several generations been the dominant race, have been in the habit of not being over particular in the matter of

helping themselves to the handsomest maidens for wives, and the children following the fathers' examples, all the grace and beauty of Crete almost has gravitated into Moslem circles. At least this is what struck me, not only at Candia, but wherever one had a chance of seeing the Moslem women. The Selino refugees, for instance, were again examples of this.

When all my investigations were over, I repaired again to the Consulate for lunch, where I found Colonel Sir H. Chermside and Sir Alfred very busy making arrangements for the comfort of the new British garrison. After finishing my writing I went out to the bazaars to see if I could find anything worth buying. In Canea there was absolutely nothing except trash, even the Cretan knives which were offered being without exception quite modern. Here, however, on this and a subsequent visit, when I accompanied the Welsh Fusiliers also to Candia later, I was able to pick up some respectable silver and gold, though very little of the latter—only two strings of the beautiful old filigree beads for which Crete was famous, and some pretty little gold chains. I was fortunate enough, though, to come across two very fine knives, or rather knives in very good *repoussé*, and carved silver sheaths made more than a hundred years ago by a celebrated craftsman who had both signed and dated them. There was one other knife by the same hand in the island, but the owner would not part with it.

When I reached Canea again on the 28th, I found that Malaxa had fallen, and that my fellow-lodger, Bass, had just returned from the scene a few hours before myself, so that he was able to give me a most graphic account of all that happened. Again I shall refrain from telling an already oft-told tale, merely remarking that it was the foreign shells, intended to turn the insurgents out of the fort, which finally sent the wretched Turkish garrison flying out of it, and that had it not been for the presence of the American correspondent, Bass, the Turks would probably have been massacred to a man by the insurgents under their Greek officers.

The incident from beginning to end was most unfortunate, and whilst the Turks considered that both the loss of life and the shame of the surrender lay at the doors of Europe, the insurgents, elated with success, lost any little respect they may ever have had for the international fleet and its guns, and proceeded at once to demolish all the other blockhouses and forts between Soobashi and Izzeddin; the former being the extreme western one of the Canea defences, and the latter the eastern, on Suda Bay. They even threatened the fairly powerful position at Izzeddin itself, and advanced against it in such a determined fashion that the Admirals decided to shell them out of their posts if they continued to push them on. It was also settled that Major Bor should garrison Izzeddin, and happening to be on board the *Revenge* on the afternoon of the 30th, I was informed of these various decisions. Foreseeing that there was every probability of another bombardment, next morning I was up betimes, and by eight o'clock was at Suda Bay. Here I found that the firing had already begun, so with some difficulty persuading a boatman to take me off, I started for Izzeddin. In less than an hour I was close up to the fort and amongst the bombarding ships, which, if I remember rightly, were the *Ardent*, the Russian *Groziastchy*, the Austrian *Tiger*, and the Turkish frigate. The latter did not do much execution, and the *Ardent* was not so very busy after the first half-hour; but the Russian kept banging away pertinaciously and making very good practice, whilst now and again the *Tiger* ranged up and let them have a round or two from her heavier guns. The artillery, however, seemed to have very little effect on the rebels, who held their ground manfully under a very hot cannonade from these ships for over two hours, not to mention the Turkish rifle fire and the volleys of the fort ordnance. It is true that the ground was very broken and rocky, and a Cretan can shelter himself almost as neatly as a hare behind even a tuft or two of grass; so that, though the shells looked very formidable, they did very little, and failed entirely to subdue the attack. Suddenly, however, a distant roar was heard, followed by an

ear-splitting crack, echoed backwards and forwards from Akrotiri to the mainland mountains, and the *Camperdown* opened with her 13-inch from her moorings four and a half miles away in the bay. Probably the landlocked lie of the ship lent additional force to the report of the big gun and the explosion of the shell, for though I have heard heavier metal I never remember anything like the din of the *Camperdown* shells. The effect on the insurgents, too, was instantaneous. We afterwards heard that nobody was actually killed, although the shots seemed to fall right "into the town," but a temporary panic was set up, and a general *sauve qui peut* followed, encouraged by which the Turks sallied out and drove the last of the insurgents over the crest of the hill. It was one of the prettiest little pieces of target practice and skirmishing anybody could wish to see, but after all it was not *la guerre*—in fact, the Cretans, though they would probably be very astonished and indignant if told so, have no idea of what fighting means beyond lurking behind rocks, if possible at least five hundred yards away from the enemy, and firing as many cartridges as they can, trusting to luck to hit somebody or something. I doubt if you could find fifty Cretans in the island who would cross quarter of a mile of open under fire of regular troops, and this accounts for the happily small loss of life during the perpetual fusilades which went on for months outside Canea, Candia, and Rethymo.

"*April 2nd.*—Morning round to Demeric, then Rees, and off in boat to the *Anson*, where lunched with Captain Mann. At five o'clock drove out to Suda. Dined *Revenge*, and had long talk with the Admiral on unsatisfactory state of affairs. Poker in the smoking-room, and my cot outside Bor's cabin."

The next morning (the 3rd), as soon as we went up on deck we noticed an extraordinary influx of Moslems from Halepa and Canea, all flocking towards Akrotiri in dozens with donkeys and mules. They crossed the neutral zone without the slightest hesitation, and proceeded straight on towards the first insurgent positions. The Akrotiriots, on the other hand, now also began to swarm out like ants.

We could not conceive what was the meaning of this, as they could scarcely mean to engage in a pitched battle deliberately under the guns of the whole fleet at a range of not more than half a mile, besides which, the Moslems were scrambling along "anyhow," and not at all in Cretan guerilla fashion. The Admiral then decided to send Major Bor and Flag-Lieutenant Buller on shore to inquire what had happened, and to use every effort to prevent bloodshed. Owing, however, to the compact for concerted action, these officers could not go alone, but had to wait until some colleague from one of the other ships could join them. At last they started, but before they even reached the shore the leading Moslems had been halted by a dozen or so of the insurgents. A very friendly parley ensued, two of the men kissing each other, and they separated; but hardly had they done so when two of the Moslems fell, shot down by the insurgents almost at the muzzle of the rifle. All this we could see quite plainly through the telescopes. Instantly everybody collapsed behind rocks and cover, and a fusilade of the usual sort began. Meanwhile, Bor and Buller could be made out scrambling as quickly as they could up the hill-side, the latter having rather a hard time of it to keep up with the lengthy-limbed Major. The foreign colleague, when the firing had fairly begun and the bullets were whistling freely, considered his mission at an end, and waited below for the return of the Britishers. The first of the combatants met were Moslems, who were very indignant at what they termed, not without some appearance of reason, though there is no arriving at truth with these arch liars, the gross treachery of the insurgents, which they declared they would punish as it merited. On reaching a group of Christians, the emissaries met with no better success. Both insurgents and Bashi Bozooks declared that the Admirals might fire upon them as much as they pleased, but they intended to fight it out. Whilst this was going on ashore, the *Revenge* had signalled through an intermediate station in to Canea to know how it all had come about, and the answer was returned that

it had been rumoured that the Akrotiri insurgents were to evacuate the peninsula that morning, and consequently the Moslems had come out to plunder them, *more Cretico*, just as their own friends had been robbed when clearing out from Selino. No attempt had been made by the authorities to stop the outward sally of the Bashi Bozooks, and Admiral Harris, whose ship was nearest to the scene of action, was on the point of sending a shell or two amongst the crowd when it was remembered that nothing could be done except "in concert," and a council was hastily summoned on board the French ship. Here it was at once decided to shell the Moslems. The insurgents had hitherto had the entire benefit of foreign fire except at Malaxa, where it was also intended for them, and it was thought that it might be a very good thing to show impartiality by giving the Moslems a shell or two. Accordingly a gun was trained on the thickest cluster, and in another moment a melinite bomb would have been in the middle of it, had not a sailor, looking through strong glasses, shouted to stop just as the gunner was pulling the detonator. He had luckily discovered the two British officers in the centre of this particular batch of Bashi Bozooks. It was Bor's last attempt at parley, and no sooner had he left them and commenced his return journey than the battle began in earnest. As I have already said, a Cretan battle is something like a game of hide-and-seek, and in a minute or two there was nobody to shell with any certainty of inflicting more damage on one side than another—in fact, very little chance of doing any damage at all. We amused ourselves with watching this fight for some time; but there is not much to see, except puffs of smoke, in these skirmishes, and an hour or two of it is enough for the spectators, though the Cretans enjoy firing to their last round. This "battle" went on till sunset, and was particularly fatal owing to the proximity (quite accidental) of the combatants when it began. I believe eight Moslems and four Christians were put *hors de combat* on this occasion —the heaviest bill in the whole course of the insurrection

—at an expenditure of perhaps ten thousand rounds of ammunition.

I do not know that anything else happened of sufficient interest to need recording during the remainder of my stay in Crete and up to the time of the outbreak of the war in the middle of April. A sort of attempt was made to disarm the Bashi Bozooks, but it was really only a farce, as altogether, as far as I could learn, only about two hundred rifles were given in, and every day I used to meet these gentry sneaking along the cactus hedges or skulking amongst the gardens and olive groves whenever I rode or walked outside the gates. And since then, just a year ago from the date on which I am writing these words, no sensible progress seems to have been made towards establishing order. If the skirmishing is not quite so frequent, not to say chronic, as it used to be, the reason probably is only that the natives are beginning to grow tired of it. Whenever he wants to do so there is nothing to hinder any Moslem or Cretan insurgent going out to stalk his enemy, and very few days pass without mention being made in Canea and Candia telegrams of what is now called "murder" instead of "an action" between the rivals, as it used to be styled in the beginning. Attempts to arrange something like friendly commercial intercourse on the island have hitherto failed ignominiously, and each Power girds at the impotence of the other and finds fault with the methods suggested or employed in turn by British, French, Austrian, Russian, or Italian. The temporary administration of Colonel Sir H. Chermside in Candia, as being by far the most important centre at present, is the largest target for especial malice, but it is not too much to say that almost the only strictures passed on the conduct of affairs in Candia, and the principal difficulties in connection therewith, proceed from representatives of other members of the vaunted Concert, and not from either Moslems or Christians of the place. At the same time it must be admitted that both of these parties have every reason to be dissatisfied both with what has and has not been done, as likewise with most of the proposals put forward for the future.

The Russian demand for the installation of Prince George of Greece was a singularly infelicitous stroke. Had such a proposal been made and enforced before or even during the war it would have been an act of open injustice and violence towards the Sultan, but coming after the events in Thessaly it became an insult and an outrage to every Turk in the empire. It was also in many senses opposed to the principles of the Concert, which had begun by laying down the axiom that in no case should Crete revert to Greece, then declared that she should have a full autonomy with equal rights secured for both Moslems and Christians, and thirdly, decided that no member of any reigning European dynasty could be considered eligible for the post of Governor-General. For months nothing was heard but official utterances by responsible Ministers over half Europe, and a chorus in the public Press concerning the perfect accord and unanimity of the Concert as regarded Crete. Nevertheless, one or more Powers always objected to every successive candidate brought up, and at last Russia, without mentioning her intention to any of her fellow-members, coolly informed the Sultan that she considered the enthronement of Prince George—there is no other word for it—would be the only way of settling the Cretan difficulty. It soon leaked out that in the early summer of 1897 this idea had been started by Russia, who had, in fact, never for an instant abandoned it, but while pretending to share the views of the other five Powers in Concert, had only remained in it so as to prevent its arriving at any result other than the one on which she was already determined. Germany very quickly dissociated herself from all further interference in Crete, and her example has now been followed by Austria and Italy. Consequently England is left, in company with the Dual Alliance, to deal with Crete. In some ways this is a sensible enough arrangement, seeing that these three Powers are guaranteeing the Greek Loan and have always been traditionally associated in disentangling the knots into which Greece ties herself. It is unfortunate, though, that they have come into action, so to speak, more or less

bound by the past of the Concert, and England especially is at a great disadvantage *vis-à-vis* a solid pair of slightly disguised political enemies—at anyrate a couple who in Eastern questions are always hostilely jealous of Britain.

As soon as the Greek Prince was proposed the Sultan made his very natural protest, and the candidature was for the time being "dropped," though not "abandoned." This is one of Russia's favourite devices, and the game she has played so long with the arrears of the War Indemnity is now being emphasised and repeated by the holding in suspense of the candidature of Prince George for Crete, and also of trouble in the Balkans through Bulgaria. The reason for the "dropping" was the sudden awakening to the fact that the Turkish army was still in Thessaly, and it might be difficult to make it move out should the Sultan take it into his head to hold Thessaly instead of Crete. For the Turkish argument was that the appointment of Prince George would be no autonomy but simply an annexation to Greece in a thinly-veiled shape: therefore if forced upon them they would be justified in retaining the territory they occupied. As nobody felt equal to the task of tackling Edhem Pasha, the Russian proposal was simply pigeon-holed for a while.

As for any alternative, none seemed to be forthcoming. The Powers made several very futile and foolish remarks to each other, the general gist of which seems to have been: "The Cretans seem to be getting on all right; we had better leave them alone. Some fine day they will probably have another set-to, and either exterminate each other totally, or else the Christians will gain their independence."

In fact, there is no doubt that when once the Concert of Europe discovered its impotency to satisfy the islanders, and to establish the boasted autonomy, it argued with itself thus: "There are only a certain number of Turkish troops on the island, and we shall never let any more be landed. These troops, together with the Moslems, are only kept from starvation by food sent from outside, since the Christians are in possession of all the interior

and productive part of Crete. In the course of events the garrisons and the population will get thinned off by death, emigration, desertion, etc., and one fine day the Christians will rise again and finish with the Moslems. And that is what we all want to see."

It would certainly have been more honest, not to say honourable, if the Concert had said openly what it whispered to itself, instead of professing to the Sultan that it wished to establish an autonomy and safeguard his suzerainty. But diplomacy, I regret to say, from my experience of it, is governed by different codes of honour than those which apply to individuals, and if the diplomacy of one Power is often crooked, what can be expected of the hashed-up policy of six?

Very likely before these lines are published some sort of a Governor will have been smuggled into Crete without asking the Sultan, and established there "quite temporarily." He will probably be a nonentity, and the Chambers and demagogues will soon get the upper hand. He may, however, be a strong man, and succeed in partially reconstructing order, in which case his temporary nomination would almost certainly be confirmed for a term of years. In either case the result will inevitably be the quick or slow elimination of the Moslem element, which is altogether doomed in Crete. In some respects this is a pity, though if the island were to change into the hands of a European Power, it would be a matter for nothing but congratulation.

The Turkish rule in Crete has been far better than in most of its provinces, but of course it is always a wretched parody of government. To change it for British or Russian—or even French, perhaps—would be a godsend to the inhabitants. It may be doubted, however, if they will find Greek discipline much better than Turkish. Under the Porte half the island was really independent, especially the province of Sphakia, which was entirely so, and levied its own customs and elected its own officials, in return for a small annual tribute which it was supposed to pay but never did.

When the *ineluctabile tempus* comes, and Crete is annexed to Greece, it will, of course, become the happy hunting-ground of all the favoured officials, as well as a fruitful field for intriguers of all breeds and the sham politicians of whom Greece is so prolific. The gay Cretan will have to serve his time in the army, and submit to such discipline as is there enforced, instead of stalking his foes and wreaking his vendettas at his own sweet will, and his trades and produce will be taxed with a vigour unknown in the easy-going days of Ahmed and Selim On the other hand, there will probably be a tough little group of about a score of Cretan Deputies, who will be able to turn the scale at any Parliamentary crisis, and who will consequently rule at Athens, and through Athens Greece.

They will, however, be elected, as a rule, from amongst noisy Athenians, and though they will enjoy the position afforded them by a Grecian Crete, I fancy the real Cretans will very soon grow sick of Greece, sicker even than they were of Turkey. Some of the most sensible Cretans themselves said to me when speaking of the future: "What we want is a strong and just Government. If we were 'united' to Greece—in other words, annexed by her—to-morrow, I would give two years as the utmost limit to which we might go without breaking out into insurrection again." The truth is that the Cretans are utter savages, brooking no authority willingly. As they rebelled against the Turks so will they rebel against the Greeks, or against each other, if they are autonomous. It is only the gradual contact with a better civilisation that will ever bring quiet into Crete—perhaps in another fifty or eighty years, but I doubt if sooner.

CHAPTER XIII

IT was in 1895 that I found myself back again in the Sultan's capital—on the dear old Bosphorus, where I am now penning these random recollections. There I discovered, curiously enough, most of the same batch of youngsters of whom I had once been a member. Sir Edgar Vincent, who had passed the same Student Interpreter Examination with myself, was Director-General of the Ottoman Bank, and, in a fashion, leader of society; Block was First Dragoman, and really though not ostensibly one of the most influential of the diplomatic corps, owing to his popularity and intimate acquaintance with everybody and everything Turkish; Richards happened to be there on his way to Damascus after his Djeddah adventure, and Alvarez was on leave from Benghazi. Later on, Eyres, the cheeriest and most schoolboyish of us all, came to take over the duties of British Consul, and it made one feel twenty years younger to meet again all the chums of one's early days. After my long spell of comparative inactivity in Russia, I had to buckle to in earnest as soon as I got into harness, for the Armenian question was just then coming to a head—or what was supposed to be a head, though it was very deliberately and successfully decapitated by Yildiz. On my way back from Russia I stayed a fortnight in Sofia by the courteous permission of Mr. Mudford, who never refused me anything at all in reason, in order to collate material for my biography of Stamboloff. The whole of this time was spent in company with the massacred statesman, who gave me about four or five hours a day, during which we would sit in his study, and he would spin out the story of his life for me, to note down as rapidly as I could. He knew perfectly well that there

was no time to lose, and was most anxious that a record of his life's work should be kept, though he frequently remarked that he doubted ever seeing it in print. When I was in Sofia, Mr. Henry Norman also happened to be there, and gave me some very handy little penny notebooks, in which I used to jot down the whole of Stamboloff's story. In doing so I used some special pens made in Bulgaria, stamped with a small bust of the Premier,—the best pens I ever wrote with,—and an aniline red ink. I remember when Stamboloff offered me the inkstand he half jokingly remarked that the colour was appropriate, for his career had always been more or less writ in blood, and would certainly end in scarlet. I fancy we neither of us actually realised how true were his words. Of course when first I reached Constantinople I had too much journalistic work to do to permit of my commencing the book, which was only due by midsummer, and it was not until I was fairly established at the Summer Palace at Therapia that I began writing it. I used to hear from Stamboloff almost every week at that period, he writing to me in Russian, as being more familiar to him than French, as far as correspondence went, though he spoke the latter language most fluently and picturesquely —but having been brought up at Odessa, his Russian was more correct and grammatical. I remember taking the first page of the Preface under my hand on the 1st of June, and writing Finis on the 18th, but before the last proofs could come back through the post all Europe was electrified by the news of the assassination. I hurriedly scribbled a postscript that afternoon, and left the next day for Sofia. It is not worth while now to recapitulate the disgraceful comedy which followed the tragedy. I sent full accounts at the time to the *Standard*, but in messages forwarded by wire for the general public one cannot give more than a tithe of the full truth. Nothing could have been more pathetic than my interview with Madame Stamboloff and her account of the closing hours of her husband's life. No novelist could ever conceive, I fancy, a more human and cruel moment than that when

Stamboloff felt himself going, and lay there with his hands amputated and his eyes bandaged. The doctors had insisted on quiet and darkness, and his wife sat beside him. "Take off the handkerchief, Polyxena," he said. She whispered that it must not be. But he was accustomed to be obeyed, and repeated, "Take it off—*I want to see the world once more.*" For him the world was a face, and the walls of his room—but it was all that he could ever hope to see again of "the world." It was Stamboloff all over; the last words he ever spoke.

As I have said, it was up at the Summer Palace that I wrote my first book. Fashion has decreed that in Constantinople everybody shall spend the summer months away from their own houses in Pera. Some go to Therapia, some to Buyukdereh, some to San Stefano, others again to Candilli, Moda, or the Prince's Islands. Of all these resorts Therapia is the most lively, owing to the presence there of the British, French, German, and Italian Embassies with their *stationnaires*, not to mention the big Summer Palace Hotel, and the smaller but perhaps more comfortable Petala's. At the next station north, on the Bosphorus, is Buyukdereh, where are the Austrian and Russian Embassies—about half an hour's drive, or row in a caïque, from Therapia. The Austrians have a new Embassy at Yenikeui, but as long as Baron Calice remains it has not much chance of being occupied. Buyukdereh has a much finer quay than Therapia, but its hotels are uncomfortable, and except a few regular residents and the staff of the two Embassies, it is not much patronised. Candilli is about half-way between town and the two Upper Bosphorus resorts, and is favoured by several old inhabitants who prefer comparative quiet with coolness and their own society. Moda and Cadikeui are not much used by outsiders, but are the headquarters of the principal English and many of the best foreign families. They lie on the eastern entrance to the Marmora, just outside Leander's Tower, but cannot compete with the Bosphorus for freshness, the heat being very oppressive after the month of July. The same applies to the Islands, which

are perfectly delightful up to June, after which the houses there are almost as hot as in Pera, though, of course, the air is cleaner and sweeter from the sea.

As probably English readers have either a very small, or very false, idea of life in Constantinople, I may be pardoned for entering into some little details not generally given in guide-books. To begin with, I will attempt to describe Therapia. Imagine a tumble-down little village built of wooden houses straggling up the sides of two or three hills. It is reached from town, and its inhabitants reach town by a service of steamers, running on an average about every hour, and taking about an hour on the journey. If you are "a family," you can hire a house, either furnished at a big rental, or unfurnished pretty cheap. Very few people, however, do this, as they have infinite worries with servants and marketing, and are, moreover, devoured by mosquitoes, which reign supreme everywhere off the sea front. The few houses on the quay, besides the hotels, are private, so that it is usually easier to patronise the latter. Of these there are two, the Summer Palace and Petala's. I certainly do not intend to especially praise or disparage either, as I have been very comfortable in both. They are, however, quite different, and everybody can choose for himself. Petala's lies next the *scala*, which is a certain advantage, since one can always see the steamer coming and going, and also amuse oneself by watching arrivals and departures. It is also exposed to the full blast of the north wind, which blows with more or less force—generally very much more—five days out of seven. This is very nice at first, and at least chases all mosquitoes away, but it becomes rather a nuisance after a while. It is quite impossible to keep a window open, else everything in the room whirls round in cyclonic dance, and if it is shut perspiration sets in. But that is the Therapia climate! From nine o'clock till six, unless one sits in a draught, there is nothing for it but to pour, and pour, and pour. The Summer Palace is not quite so exposed to the north wind, but all its front rooms are pretty airy. The back ones are generally given to ladies'

maids and valets. On the other hand, if you live in "The Palace" you are rather dependent on boatmen to catch your steamer, unless you choose to walk round the most unsavoury village—and this is a very great disadvantage. But they have a nice public drawing-room, which is open practically to the whole of Therapia society every evening, and all day in fact; a big terrace, on which there is always tea going on every afternoon; a velodrome, and two tennis courts, one in front and one behind the hotel, prettily shaded by trees, and affiliated to the regular Constantinople Club. In this connection a tournament takes place every year, with very handsome prizes for Singles, Doubles, and Mixed Doubles for ladies and gentlemen, attracting entries from both Smyrna and Egypt. Indeed the "Palace" Tennis Court is probably the most frequented lounge of Therapia—in the mornings for ladies and a few idle diplomats, and in the evenings for the men back from town. There are also dances given about once a week at the "Palace," to which anybody who is known at all is welcome, and altogether the hotel is a general "rendezvous" for those who want to amuse themselves.

Besides the hotel festivities and the Embassy garden-parties and dances, of which there are always a good many, the richer residents generally entertain a great deal, and there are few evenings when a man need stay at home if sociably inclined. Of outdoor sports, other than tennis, there are occasional paper-chases, picnics without end to Belgrade Forest, Kilios, the Giant's Mountain, and elsewhere, and cricket matches at Beicos at least once and often twice a week. The Beicos meadows belong to the Sultan, but are always free to foreigners for cricket or football. A more ideal ground could hardly be imagined, and from July onwards till October, and even November, it is seldom that a Wednesday or Saturday passes without a match being brought off. The *stationnaires* bear the brunt of these shows, providing tea and refreshments, and most of the idle fair ones come over in their caïques or launches to make pretence of watching the progress of the contests. When stumps are drawn at six, or thereabouts,

the best time of the day has come, and there is still an hour or two before dressing for dinner, to be spent in sailing or roaming up to Buyukdereh, or drifting about in mid-current to make private arrangements for the rest of the evening. Of course a correspondent, at least an English one, has no choice of villegiatura, and is bound to follow his Embassy up to Therapia, and there abide under its shadow. It may be thought that his lot is not a very hard one, and I for one would not be the first to grumble, but nevertheless Therapia is apt to pall on one after a while. Of course the men are obliged to be perpetually running backwards and forwards into town, and an hour each way on a Bosphorus boat is not pure enjoyment in summer time, especially when it is followed or preceded by a toil up to Pera and back, or worse, to the Porte at Stamboul, with a temperature of 110° and a dust fit to choke a chimney. Then we have to pay fancy prices for everything at Therapia, and, of course, keep up some sort of a *pied-à-terre* in town all the time—paying for our lunches at Therapia when eating them at the club, and twelve shillings a bottle, or an alternative of five shillings corkage, for our whisky in the evenings on our Bosphorus balcony, when the self-same dew can be had at three and sixpence anywhere in the street. And you can put everything else on the same scale. It must come very hard on some people ; though correspondents who have rational editors are of course beyond the reach of such cares.

In addition to the resources already mentioned, one can get some very pleasant riding all round Therapia, and for those who do not keep their own horses there is a stable ready to supply very decent mounts. Sailing is also indulged in, though scarcely to such an extent as one might expect, considering that a strong breeze may be counted upon with tolerable certainty for five days out of six. There is a regatta always held towards the end of the season, but the principal interest centres in the races for the rowing boats of the various *stationnaires* and *caiquejees*, and any sailing match that creeps into the programme attracts little attention.

Before going to the Upper Bosphorus most people take an intermediate step at the Islands or one of the nearer stations. Both Prinkipo and Halki are most agreeable in the early spring, being delightfully warm, whilst Pera is still in raw and chilly mists. The pine woods, too, which cover these islands, are an extra attraction, especially for convalescents from winter influenza, which attacks about fifty per cent. of the European population every year. Nothing can be more reposeful than to lie stretched amongst the heather with the breeze sweeping in from the sea to load itself with the fragrance of the flowers and the forests, and listen lazily to the plash of the waves on the rocks a couple of hundred feet below; and then one gets such splendid food to satisfy the splendid appetite which island air inspires. Such fish as never appear at Pera *tables-d'hôte*, and vegetables, too, which are a real treat after the usual fare to which frequenters of clubs and hotels are accustomed. But perhaps for fish, Cadikeui and Moda take the palm. When I used to stay there we had only to hail a fisherman and tell him what we wanted, and it was ten to one that in an hour's time he would return with the order executed, whether it had been for three or four dozen oysters scraped up with the long four-pronged fork under our windows, a couple of solemn lobsters, or a dozen scrabbling crabs. If it was other fish we wanted, there was generally fat pink-red mullet or thorny-backed turbot to be had alive and kicking from the brine, and the baser sorts of mackerel, mullet, and such common fry were of course drugs in the market. San Stefano is much beloved of its own, though it never had much attractions for myself, nor apparently for the great *profanum vulgus*. There is, however, no denying that it has certain mild sporting advantages as autumn draws on, since it is one of the favourite pitches of the migrating quail, which are killed in tens, if not in hundreds, of thousands there during September and October. It is also celebrated for its lark-shooting — a pastime not a little affected by the ladies, who turn out in the daintiest of costumes, armed with twenty-bores and mirrors to collect

materials for the pie. The next station to San Stefano is Kutchuk Chekmedjee, at the mouth of the lake, which stretches from there to Yarem Bourgas. This piece of water at times affords very good fun, both with rod and gun. It swarms with pike, and when they are on the feed it is not difficult to take a dozen with a spoon which will probably average between three and ten pounds apiece. If the weather is at all severe, there are always enormous flocks of duck swimming and flighting about the lake in winter, whilst grebe, divers, moorhens, and coot flap and dive in all directions. As for the latter, the surface is often black with them for hundreds of yards, and there must be many many thousands domiciled on this stretch. If one takes a boat from Kutchuk Chekmedjee and punts through the sluice gates into the lake, it will be an hour and a half's sailing and rowing to reach the bank of tall rushes at Yarem Bourgas fringing the stream and the marsh whither one goes to look, and seldom in vain, for snipe. As I am touching again on the subject of sport, I may as well finish with it before going further. The cream of shooting round Constantinople has always been considered to be the woodcock. For those who care for quail, there is an endless supply, but the cock is the king of the game-bag for Constantinople gunners. The first places where they appear are generally at Kilios on the Black Sea, and in the Belgrade Forest near Buyukdereh, after which, especially if there is a good fall of snow, they may generally be caught at Cherkesskeui and Sinekli on the railway line to Adrianople. The lucky ones who succeed in hitting off the first days of the passage at any of these places—and the passengers as well — can easily make fifteen or twenty couple bags, and that number of fine fat cock is very respectable. Another place where huge bags can be made, if the right day is "spotted," is at Dil Bournou, on the Gulf of Ismidt. I have myself seen the cock there flying about towards evening like jackdaws, and feeding out in the open on the grass by twos and threes. This only occurs, though, after a sudden snowstorm, covering all the hills and high grounds, and driving the birds down

to the sea. Other good ground is inland from Touzla on the Ismidt Railway, and behind Candilli, where birds remain the whole winter up to March, though not in such numbers as in the first-mentioned choice preserves. There is indeed one piece of thick cover not more than half an hour's drive from Pera, belonging to the Sultan's Civil List, where on almost any afternoon from October to March you can move eight or ten cock — the knocking them over depends on your being perhaps rather above the average at the game.

Snipe may be had at various places, one of the best marshes being at Ismidt. Pheasants are now very scarce, though a few can be had near Broussa, as also partridges, which have been nearly exterminated in European Turkey within a wide radius of Constantinople. Big game consists of pig and roedeer. Bear and stag are daily becoming rarer and more difficult to find anywhere near the city. Wild boar and roe may, however, be had within easy distance by those who have the opportunity of hunting with the Cercle d'Orient, or with either Cherif or Abram Pasha. The best bag I heard of was made by Cherif Pasha and his party, of which I myself was one, at Chaoush Chiftlik on the Gulf of Ismidt. In two days we killed eighteen pig, two roedeer, and a good many cock and "various." We hunted with a pack of about forty hounds, four or five couple of which were put into each beat. There were perhaps a dozen beaters who walked through with the hounds, and in all I daresay thirty or forty guns of sorts posted at points of vantage, though the real "shooting line" on which we eight real guns stood generally had most of the firing. My own share of this record was two boar on the first day. I cannot quit the subject without paying a tribute to our genial host, Cherif Pasha, now named Ottoman Minister to the Court of Stockholm. There are hundreds of very keen sportsmen amongst the lower-class Turks, but in the upper ranks this taste is comparatively rare. Abram Pasha was probably the father of organised sport in Turkey, something after Western ideas, and his example was followed

by Izzet and Cherif Pasha. Poor Izzet, who took great pains over his wild fowling at Chekmedjee, is now languishing in exile at Tripoli, and a good deal of Abram Pasha's shooting has been annexed by the Civil List. I fancy that Cherif Pasha's property at Chaoush Chiftlik will also go to rack and ruin before long, in the absence of its master. This is a pity, as it was and is a magnificent piece of natural cover, carefully preserved for the last year or two by Cherif Pasha, who bought the whole estate for a mere song. Owing to the prevalence of brigandage all down both sides of the Gulf of Ismidt, nobody cared much to bid for land in these parts until Cherif Pasha, son of the venerable Saïd Pasha, ex-Minister of Foreign Affairs, and himself A.D.C. to the Sultan and General of Brigade, bought it up. He at once built a shooting box there, with kennels for a pack of hounds, and plenty of accommodation for guests and beaters, and an invitation to shoot at Chaoush Chiftlik was always one of the ambitions of Constantinople Nimrods. Nobody was ever invited who was likely to be unpleasant to anybody else, and the best of good-fellowship always reigned, as it could hardly fail to do under the presidency of the unselfish *bonhomie* of the Pasha, whose jolly face and laugh kept us all in perpetual good-humour. But I must once and for all tear myself away from forest, river, and marsh, to approach more serious subjects; and the question is, which first to grapple with? I am here confronted with much the same difficulty as in dealing with Russia. It would not be very hard to write a whole book on Turkey as I have known it, and there is only half a chapter at disposal. To begin with, let us take the Palace —the *fons et origo mali*.

If anybody could put on paper a truthful record of one month's doings at Yildiz, the book would be worth a thousand pounds — take any month of the year. That small circumference of two or three square miles on the top of the hill above Ortakeui and Beshiktash contains more iniquity, probably, than any area ten times as great on the surface of the globe. And the consequences of

what goes on so quietly in those shaded gardens and kiosques influence the whole civilised and more than half the barbarian world.

The moving spirit, the great master of the "Star Serai," is Abdul Hamid II.—a small-sized, stooping, but square-shouldered man, with a huge hooked Semitic or Armenian nose, shifty but piercing eyes under shaggy grey eyebrows looking out from a wrinkled grey-brown face, with slow step, and deliberate caressing utterance of speech, long-fingered claw-like hands, and slender narrow feet. When he came to the throne, the Sultan trod on his elder brother, and tried to forget the death of his uncle, trembling lest his own latter end should resemble theirs. But fate fought for him, and slowly but surely he settled himself firmly, and more firmly still, in the chair of his mighty ancestors. One by one he got rid of all the most dangerous of his statesmen, ending by strangling Midhat at Taïf, doing away with Damad, making a domestic prisoner of Ghazi Osman, exiling Mukhtar to Egypt, and confining Kutchuk Saïd to his Yalu. By degrees he reduced the Grand Vizierate to impotence, and the Porte to a nonentity. The whole machinery of Government, as far as it was left in Turkish hands, was concentrated at Yildiz. The Council of Ministers rendered its *mazbatas* or decrees, as of old, but they were confirmed or rejected at the Palace without reason or motive. Grand Vizier and Ministers were treated like dogs, and the language used to them was such as they themselves would scarcely employ to their valets. The post of First Secretary at the Palace became far more important than that of the Grand Vizier, and that of a flunkey at Yildiz was more influential than the portfolio of a Minister. Such is the state of affairs to-day at the Palace on the top of the hill. A little ring surrounds the person of the Sovereign, inside which none but foreign Diplomats of the highest rank can hope to penetrate. It is difficult to say exactly who rules the roast, as there are several of almost equal influence and importance whose interest lies in keeping on good terms with each other.

Firstly, there is the domestic clique, headed by Loutfi Agha, a sort of head butler or major domo, associated with whom are Raghib Bey, Hadji Ali, and a few others. These are in hourly contact with the Sultan, and have almost unlimited patronage in questions which do not immediately affect external relations. It is through them that small concessions, minor administrative appointments, decorations, and insignificant pilferings are arranged.

The Army and Navy clique, through which all service promotions, Turkish contracts for the Ministry of War and Marine are arranged, and so on, is headed by one or two officers whom I will not name, and a few favourite Circassian and Albanian ruffians who enjoy the highest Imperial favour. I feel tempted to give some anecdotes of the manner in which these gentry operate, but if once one began it would be hard to stop. I may, however, notice one flagrant case, which is of such public notoriety that there can be no offence in quoting it.

I refer to that of an Albanian who distinguished himself during the late war by indiscriminate pillage and rapine in Epirus, and who on the conclusion of peace repaired hither, and was named A.D.C. Fifty pages could be filled with this man's exploits, but I will confine myself to one of them.

There was an old man who had served the Ottoman Bank for thirty-five years, and who wished to retire. Sir Edgar Vincent agreed to allow him to do so, and gave him a sum of about one hundred and fifty pounds to enable him to dower his daughter, who was at school in Odessa and engaged to be married. On leaving the Bank Buildings, he stated to a friend, in the fulness of his heart, what had happened. This individual happened to be a tout for the Albanian, Ghani Bey, and at once seized the opportunity of inviting the other to spend the evening with himself and some friends. This he did well knowing that Dimitri, living in poor lodgings, would be sure to carry his cash on his person. After dinner, he called for his victim, and they repaired to a room in which were Ghani Bey, his henchman Tcherkess Hassan, a daredevil

cut-throat, and another Palace official. No sooner was the old man seated than Ghani demanded his money, enforcing the request by pointing a loaded revolver at his head, whilst Hassan pinned him from behind.

In the end Dimitri was robbed, beaten almost to insensibility, packed into a cab, and deposited at his door, minus his money, and with a threat that if he dared to open his mouth he was a dead man. He fell into a brain fever, during which his daughter arrived from Odessa. On recovery, nothing daunted by the threats, he applied to the Greek Minister for redress; but before a complaint could be made, the war broke out, and Prince Mavrocordalo had to leave. The prospective bridegroom, hearing of the loss of the dowry, refused to fulfil the engagement, and the last I heard of the old man was that both he and his daughter were reduced to absolute beggary. Comment on a story like this is needless, especially when the hero of it is notorious as having repeated similar acts of almost open brigandage half a dozen times, all of which have been brought under notice of the police without any measures having been taken to punish him; on the contrary, he still enjoys the highest favour.

It may be asked, What is the reason that the Sultan permits officers wearing his uniform to incur the universal opprobrium of Pera? And the answer is that anything is pardoned to men who are supposed to be absolutely reckless, and to stick at nothing if it is to their interest. It is a knot of similar devoted bravadoes which the Sultan wishes to keep round his person; and the "Prætorian Guard," as it is called, which is on chronic duty at Yildiz, is composed of pampered mercenaries, who are petted and paid for nothing else than to keep them in blind devotion round their master, who winks at any enormities they choose to commit on their own account.

There is also the religious coterie under Abdul Hudda erstwhile a wandering dervish, and now one of the "Head Centres" of Islam. There can be little doubt that no effervescence either in Asia or Africa goes on without more or less active encouragement from the Holy Synod

at Yildiz, which holds its meetings every Tuesday, and issues its bulls as despotically as those are launched which come from the Vatican. I myself frequently heard it said in Constantinople, five or six months before the troubles actually broke out, that England must look out for storms on the North-West Frontier, and discoveries of proclamations and correspondence later on amply proved the meddling of the Yildiz crew in the rising.

Besides those already mentioned, there is the First Secretary and his small particular clique, which is nevertheless one of the most powerful of them all. With Loutfi Agha, Tahsin Bey shares the enormous advantage of being in daily personal contact with the Sovereign for several hours, whereas many of the other myrmidons only have occasional and fleeting access to the presence of the Sultan.

Tahsin himself is one of the most curious and really interesting of all the actors on the Turkish stage, although very little is usually heard of him by the outside world. His office of First Secretary is probably at the present moment as influential, if not more so than any other in the empire. The growth of Palace power, synchronous with the decline of that of the Grand Vizierate and the Porte, dates from the day when Kutchuk Saïd showed to the Sultan how omnipotent the hand of Yildiz might be made, and how easy it would be to concentrate the whole administration within its walls, by working through a First Secretary instead of through a nominally responsible Vizier or Minister. In order to carry out this programme, it was necessary to find a Bash Kiatib (or First Secretary) who should always be content to efface himself, and remain eternally under the greatest of all shadows. If responsibility were to be fixed on him, he would be no better than those whom he had robbed both of it and its privileges. Tahsin Bey might have been created expressly for the position, so perfectly does he fulfil all its requirements. Anybody who has ordinary business with Yildiz is sure to be firstly referred to Tahsin. On driving up the hill, his carriage will be stopped a hundred yards away from the

gates, and one or other of a miserable pack of jackals in waiting will escort him very ostentatiously up to the portals, in the hopes of a shilling tip for doing nothing. Before entering, the visitor is quickly deprived of his umbrella and stick (another shilling to get them back), and asked his name, address, and profession. On mentioning Tahsin Bey, he is led along the garden-walk, and into a little kiosque or low range of buildings, where he is again, on entering, deprived of his coat, goloshes, and other encumbrances (one shilling more). He is then ushered into a waiting-room amongst a motley crowd of turbaned sheikhs, uniformed officers, be-fezzed and apologetic-kneed officials, and perhaps another foreigner or two. The room is furnished with a mixture of tawdry magnificence, squalor, and childish decoration. Bookcases filled with presentation volumes occupy various corners, and gorgeously-illuminated texts of the Korân, together with absurd and archaic attempts at landscape-painting, adorn the walls.

Coffee and cigarettes, of course, are brought, and it will depend on the importance of the visitor or the length of his patience how long he may wait. An English correspondent may expect about half to three-quarters of an hour, if he cares to stay it out. Three-quarters of an hour to drive there, and the same back, and the time of the interview will take up the whole morning or afternoon, and cost about a sovereign. It is worth it once in a way, but not often. When your turn comes, a shuffling little menial will beg you to step in, and you cross to Tahsin's den. This is a small room, about fifteen or twenty feet square, furnished with a writing-table for the Secretary, and a divan and a couple of chairs for those who come to see him.

If you are of any importance, Tahsin will gracefully salute and ask after your health, before continuing scribbling at the paper he is always holding in his hand. The lesser fry are allowed to take their seats, and wait an indefinite time before receiving any notice whatever. Tahsin is a man of about thirty-five, or at most forty,

with a pretty crisp black beard, and soft, deer-like eyes, the most gentle, caressing voice imaginable, and altogether the most modest mien of any Bey in Turkey. Yet it is through the throat of this dove, so to speak, that the lion roars, and his delicate, feminine hands are the velvet gloves under which the iron fingers of Abdul Hamid indite their most fateful *Iradehs*.

Whenever any question of sudden importance arises with a foreign Power, it is through the First Secretary that any confidential *pourparlers* are always engaged; and every negotiation with the Armenian Patriarchate, with the Revolutionists, with the Young Turks, with the Albanians, in fact every imaginable contingency requiring tact and secrecy, is dealt with almost exclusively by the Sphinx-like Tahsin, often, if not generally, to the entire exclusion of the Vizier and the nominally responsible Ministers.

It is true that the Ambassadors sometimes see Tewfik Pasha, Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the First Dragomans repair almost daily to the Porte for the transaction of current business; but for everything at all touching *la haute politique*, it is always through the First Secretary that communication is opened with the Sultan himself. In other words, the Porte has now become merely a bureau attached to the Secretariate, whose decisions it has to carry out. The Council of Ministers sits every Wednesday at Stamboul to preserve appearances, but whenever occasion arises it is convoked in *séance extraordinaire* at Yildiz, and in either case its opinions are simply embodied in a *mazbata*, which is forwarded through Tahsin Bey to the Sultan, and only becomes executory after receiving the Imperial *Iradeh*, or sanction. In old days the *Iradeh* was only required for decisions of exceptional importance, but nowadays a heap of sand cannot be shifted from one side of the road to the other without a royal *Iradeh*. The effect of this system on the Administration can scarcely be imagined by those not familiar with things Turkish, as it most certainly cannot be described in its far-reaching results. The battles for *Iradehs*

are ceaseless, and the victory rests almost always with those who can pay the most. Diplomatic pressure, of course, succeeds sometimes in extorting these precious instruments when the opposition is not too strong; but even in such cases the process is often most wearisome, and the most ridiculous uncertainty often exists for weeks at a time as to whether such and such an *Iradeh* has actually been issued or not. One of the stone walls in the path of *Iradehs* is the Council of State, in which one or two members, or one, if he is strong enough, can block a measure which has been approved separately by its own Ministry and by the Council of Ministers *en bloc*. I might give dozens, scores, perhaps hundreds, of cases, but here is a typical one. There was a British philanthropic society which wished to provide water for the thirsty pilgrims at Jerusalem. It sought no profit—in fact, it would have been only at a loss that the scheme could have been carried out. It was strongly approved by everybody concerned, but in the Council of State Djâvid Bey, son of Khalil Rifaat Pasha, the Grand Vizier, declared that unless he received a thousand pounds the concession should not pass. Remonstrances were made to him to the effect that the Holy Tomb was a place of worship to Moslems as well as to Christians, and that the work was a pious one. It was all to no purpose: he held out for his payment. The British Embassy pressed, and every resource was brought to bear, but up to the moment of writing without avail.[1]

The difficulties in the way of obtaining any decisive order are of course immensely increased by the hundred and one channels leading up to the final *Iradeh*, which is itself jealously guarded by a rapacious horde, all of whose mouths have to be filled before they will cease yelping their opposition. This is one of the reasons why, since the

[1] This youth, Djâvid Bey, perhaps twenty-five years old, for some time kept a sort of auction near Galata Bridge, where he quite openly sold Government appointments in the provinces to the highest bidders. Not only minor posts were thus disposed of, but Caimakams, Mudirs, and, I believe, once or twice even Valis, bought their places from Djâvid at the Bridge. This is of such public notoriety that there is no harm in stating the fact.

inauguration of the new régime under Abdul Hamid II., British interests have suffered very appreciably. Whereas foreigners, especially the Teutonic breed and alien Easterns, such as Greeks, Syrians, Jews, and Egyptians, are perfectly willing, and more or less able, to wrestle and squabble with endless patience through the interminable labyrinthine windings which now surround the (apparently) simplest piece of business, and to make their calculations beforehand with the greatest nicety as to how much palm-grease is required, the Britisher has neither the equanimity nor the necessary fellow-feeling to enable him to waste time and money in struggling to retain a market which he was one of the first to open, and which he long ruled. A German Jew or a Greek, a Syrian or a Copt, quite enjoys the ignoble heckling which every business man has to engage in with the present Turkish Administration, because it is quite congenial to his nature. With an Englishman, however, it is repugnant to all his ideas, and we are gradually being beaten out of the field in big contracts as in petty trading.

Besides national idiosyncratical reasons, too, it must also be taken into account that our Embassy has seldom lately taken the trouble to put its foot down on any commercial questions, whereas those of several other Great Powers seem to consider themselves rather as Consulates than Embassies, and are equally ready to promise Diplomatic countenance and support in return for financial and trade favours as they are to send in ultimatums and call up warships on the slightest provocation—two courses which are studiously avoided by ourselves except when the gravest interests are at stake, whereas they are adopted by others if one of their subjects is ever so little aggrieved in body, mind, or estate.

There is a popular belief abroad that the Sultan lives in a state of perpetual fear and trembling for his life, and that the Palace of Yildiz is guarded by a thousand elaborate contrivances against any would-be assassins. Having had as good opportunities as most observers, and a great deal better chance than nine out of ten of forming

an opinion through those in comparatively close contact with His Majesty's person, I diffidently hazard my opinion for what it may be worth, that "The Great Assassin" has at least as comfortable and untroubled a life as the majority of his royal "brothers" in Europe. Several times when I have happened to be within the Gardens I have seen the Sultan driving about alone in his little victoria, accompanied only by a groom or his son, or walking at perfect ease about the gravel paths, and he has never on any occasion given to me the least impression of being under the influence of open or hidden fear. Whether he really fancies that he may escape the fate of most of his predecessors,[1] or whether with Moslem indifference he is awaiting his hour, I maintain that neither in face nor behaviour does Abdul Hamid betray the slightest apprehension of the terror under which he is so frequently represented as living. The ground for this legend is probably his dislike for driving about in public, and his gradual withdrawal from all but the necessary Friday ceremonials and the function of the Hirkaï Cherif. As a matter of fact, though, if outsiders wished to attempt his life, there would be very little difficulty in effecting their purpose during any Selamlik—far more easily than on the rare occasions when His Majesty quits the precincts of Yildiz and is surrounded by vigilant and emulous escorts, whilst all sorts of ostentatious precautions are taken beforehand both by the army and police. Of course an assassin at Yildiz could hardly expect to survive many moments, but then most actual or intending regicides have made up their minds to exchange their own lives for that of the victim. I have twice seen the Sultan's carriage approached by petitioners, who might just as well have been assassins, on Friday Selamliks. And on the first occasion a paper, which might have been a bomb, was thrown straight into the Sultan's lap, whilst the man leant over the edge of the vehicle. Yet I am bound to say, though everybody else seemed electrified with excitement, the Sultan himself scarcely started, and neither dropped

[1] Only two Sultans have died an undoubtedly natural death.

his reins nor whip, but drove calmly on, as if nothing had happened. Of course people said afterwards that it had been arranged, but I think not; and I do not see how any determined man could be prevented from getting a fair chance on any Friday. It is for this reason that it seems absurd to uphold the theory of the Sultan's timorousness. As long as he drives to and fro to the Selamlik every week, and allows the public as free access as he does at present to the neighbourhood of the Mosque, he cannot much mind any risks he ever runs elsewhere, as they are far inferior to the regular danger, if danger there be, which he meets Friday after Friday from year's end to year's end.

Talking of plots and assassinations naturally leads one to ask who is likely to be the assassin. There are four categories from which such an individual might be drawn. Firstly, and by far the most dreaded, are the so-called "Young Turks." This party is recruited mostly from the Softas, or theological students, and from the naval and military colleges, whilst it also embraces a considerable number of the old aristocracy, such as it exists in Turkey. The latter are disgusted at the influence and power exercised by all the brood left behind by Mahmoud Nedun Pasha, the Grand Vizier of Abdul Aziz—men like Loutfi Agha, Hadji Ali, and others, who, from being domestic servants within the memory of all the old Pashas, now reign supreme over the once proud empire of the Ottomans, and are bringing it to rapid ruin. The younger generation follow the ideas of Midhat Pasha and his Constitution, and would establish Ministerial responsibility and education, attempting to regenerate Turkey through its own sons instead of by importing foreign advisers and reformers. The Young Turkey party looks upon the present Sultan as the chief offender, from the system he has inaugurated of breaking up every little bundle of sticks, and snapping them one after another, till there is scarcely any foundation left at present on which to build up a new edifice.[1]

[1] My metaphor is mixed, but the meaning is clear.

The Young Turks, though fully alive to the many superiorities of European methods, are most averse to having these methods forced upon them by Europeans, being of opinion, and quite rightly, that not one Western in ten thousand is capable of understanding the needs of Orientals. What they wish is themselves to introduce such reforms as they see are most urgently needed, since experience has taught them that the interference of the Powers, though exercised nominally, and sometimes genuinely and earnestly, in the interests of the empire, invariably leads to a curtailment of Ottoman rights and privileges and a gradual undermining of their independence.

Europe has now come to the conclusion that it is impossible for the Turks to govern themselves decently—being logically forced to that deduction by the persistent and increasing misrule under the régime which now obtains at Yildiz. Consequently Europe has never had any sympathy with the Young Turks, who have been left to fight their battle quite alone. The struggle against the arbitrary, unlimited, and murderous powers that be is unequal, and hitherto has led to no result at all, except wholesale exile and a good deal of torture and bloodshed. In fact, although much less has been heard about their sufferings, the Young Turks have been as badly treated in proportion to their numbers as the Armenians. With the ideas they hold they cannot expect—or at least they will never receive—much help from Europe, and so closely are they watched by the legion of spies that they dare not even subscribe five pounds towards a common object. Being unable to collect money, to found newspapers, to form Committees, or otherwise propagate their ideas, their hopes naturally centre in the disappearance of the Sultan. I do not say that they go so far as to contemplate any *coup de main*, but there is little doubt that at Yildiz, if any fear at all is felt, it arises from this quarter.

The second foe is the Armenian. But the events of the last few years have inspired the Sultan with considerable confidence respecting the Armenians. In the first

place, they are Christians, and in dealing with them he has the general sympathy and support of every class of his Moslem subjects. It is a fundamental tenet of the faith that any Giaour who rebels against Islam or stirs up discord is to be destroyed. The Armenians have not ceased from provoking the Sultan in the most objectionable of all forms. If they had simply risen by themselves, the rising would probably have been put down in the usual way on the spot, and nothing more would have been heard of it. But the Armenians worked in a different fashion. They formed Committees abroad, interested foreign missionaries and politicians, complained to Consuls and Embassies, and left no stone unturned to bring about the active intervention of Europe in their favour. They had always been labouring under the common disabilities of Christian *rayahs* of the Porte—in exactly the same degree (and, I deliberately state my conviction, in no greater one)—as Bulgars, Greeks, and other *rayahs*, until they began agitating amongst foreign circles. It was then that the Sultan was told that the Armenians were plotting for the dismemberment of the empire—that they were striving to induce Russia or England, or all the Powers, to coerce Turkey—as they were—and that they were a danger to Islam. The Sultan lent a complaisant ear to these whispers, and decided to punish the offenders. The Sassoun massacres were by no means the beginning of the story, but they first opened the eyes of Europe. As has always happened when Europe has tried to operate upon the Sultan in Concert, the Powers commenced by conferences and joint notes and threats innumerable. His Majesty only grew more angry at this result of the Armenian intrigues, which was exactly what had been foretold by the fanatical Moslems. They urged that the wretched Armenians must be wiped out, in order to give a lesson to the infidels, and the work began. As for the Powers in Concert, Abdul Hamid never cared one jot for such a combination. The Concert, in his eyes, is an instrument for the perpetuation of his rule, as mutual jealousies prevent any one of its members from taking

him to task. The break-up of the Concert is his only fear—an independent action of Russia or England or some other Western nation has greater terrors for him than all the far-off thunder of the Concert. In the matter of the Armenians, events are too recent to need recapitulation. An absurd Reform Scheme was framed with a flourish of trumpets after several thousand Armenians had been sacrificed to the blatant Committees, and when it had been delegated to the wastepaper basket, where it now reposes, a few thousand more were murdered, just to show the Sultan's contempt for European interference.

The Committees, every member of which in my humble opinion ought to be hanged, nevertheless continued to work and threaten in safety from European capitals, leaving their unfortunate compatriots to bear the consequences in Turkey. At last the Armenian Patriarchate came into direct communication with the Sultan, and temporarily induced the Committees to keep quiet. The result was immediately seen in a relaxation of several of the strictest and most oppressive measures in force, and in the holding out of some hope for the future.

I am the last man to justify in any sense the barbarous and ruthless massacres of the innocents, but I maintain that the responsibility for them rests divided between the cowardly Committees abroad and the braggart and ineffectual intervention of Europe. The Committees brought about the intervention, and the intervention provoked the Sultan, and brought about the massacres. Either there ought to have been no intervention, or it ought to have been thorough. Intervention by the Concert, though, can never be thorough, and the net result of the whole miserable business was the loss of scores of thousands of innocent lives, the desolation of fruitful provinces, and the absolute wreckage of the whole Armenian national wealth and prosperity, whilst not one single murderer was ever shot or hanged, and the power and prestige of the Sultan was consequently, through his capacity for defying Europe, thus proved, enormously increased.

It is all very well to call him the "Great Assassin," but from a Moslem point of view he was very fairly justified in killing any number of rebellious infidels who were being supported by combined Europe in what he and every Turk considered as a plot against the realm. The Turks retorted on England especially, that we used to blow Moslems from the muzzles of our guns and burn whole villages and mosques in India for an insult offered to one of our officials, and were they not to make an example of these Armenian dogs?

It is a ghastly and unpleasant subject, but having been on the spot and seen the inner working of the whole machinery, and heard the opinions of all concerned, I think it only right to put the blame a little more evenly on the right shoulders. There is no doubt that Abdul Hamid ordered most of the massacres and so earned his title of "Assassin," but the accessories before the fact, and after it, were the Huntchak and other Committees and the cackling Concert of Europe. The honours or disgrace of the conflict rest, so far, entirely with Yildiz. From time to time the Committees threaten to use dynamite against the Bank, Public Debt, or other innocent establishment, thus prosecuting their infamous and futile programme of attempting to force the hand of Europe by outrages on innocent people, Christians like themselves. If any one of the Committee men had the heart of a mouse he would come to Constantinople and strike the blow himself at Yildiz, but the Sultan has no fear of any such self-devotional courage, and though another bomb or two may be thrown here and there, it is not apprehended that any danger is threatened now from Huntchak, Trochak, or other "ak" or "ian."

The other two categories of possible conspirators are the army and isolated desperadoes smarting under individual grievance. As regards Ministerial combinations such as, under Midhat and Hussein Avni, deposed Murad, they need not be taken into account, as all cohesion or semblance of any official party has long since disappeared. Kiamil Pasha is now too old, and Kutchuk Saïd, the only

other man who might perhaps have rallied the bureaucrats round him, is altogether paralysed politically, and historically may be considered to have ceased to exist. None of the present Ministry have any following to speak of, or any programme or indeed individuality, unless it be Mahmoud Djellaladin Pasha, and his record is not one to inspire confidence or to command the slightest following or respect, much less support, either from Turks or Ambassadors. Most of the latter representing Europe would be only too delighted to see an upheaval and the deposition of the Sultan, and several of them would doubtless give every possible assistance and countenance to any movement tending to such a result, if it offered any tangible guarantees for the substitution of anything better, or even of success. But their official position precludes them from all but the most guarded expressions of sympathy with this or that kick at the licentious tyranny against which they themselves weakly protest, verbally here through their dragomans, and in writing through the couriers to their respective Cabinets.

The army remains. All that is left of Turkey to-day is really its soldiery. By the sword the empire was created, and, according to biblical teaching, by the sword alone it can fall. Meanwhile it is by its sword that it keeps on its legs. Whatever else is bad about the Moslem faith, it cannot be denied that it breeds good fighters. Anybody who sees the Moslem in the field, whether it be our own troops in India,—our Afridi foes,—the Baggara dervishes, or the Turkish linesmen, cannot fail to be struck with his splendid qualities. The essence of the faith which is in him sends him as calmly into battle as if he were going to till his field. If he falls, it is only to pass straight from a life of struggle, toil, and weariness into the Paradise of Djinna; whether he fall or not is written in the Book. He will pick his way as unconcernedly under a storm of bullets as if he were driving his donkey to market, and when in the field, under orders, he obeys them as blindly as a child obeys his father. The call to arms is also answered as readily as if it were a bidding

to a feast. It is the summons from the Caliph, who sits in the seat of God. As years go on and the light of civilisation penetrates more clearly into the blindness of the old faith—as the Moslem is brought slowly into closer and more contaminating contact with the independent and free-thinking standards of Western and Christian philosophy, the original devotion to the Crescent and the Prophet, to the Caliph and the Korân, is certainly weakening, but it is still strong enough to make the Turkish nation and the Ottoman army a valuable friend or a formidable foe. The navy has for the last twenty years been a withered branch, but since the Greek War, when not a little needless apprehension was felt from the Greek fleet, a slight revival has been noticeable in this department, and the time may yet come when, if Turkey has money, she may again possess ships. But to-day the army is still supreme, and is the most mighty artery of Turkey. If any party or foreign Power, any General or Minister, could succeed in gaining over the suffrages of a majority of the Constantinople garrison or of the Adrianople Army Corps, it need only be a question of hours to establish a provisional Government.

It is in view of such a contingency that the Sultan has fortified Yildiz and filled its precincts and the surrounding barracks with picked regiments with increased pay, and officers devoted to his service and pampered with every imaginable favour. In all there are probably some fifteen thousand men in and around the Palace, with another fifteen thousand spread along the Bosphorus, the near edges of the Marmora, and in Stamboul. The officers of all these outside regiments are frequently changed, and an army of spies is attached to each, so that no possible surprise could be attempted by them on the faithful at Yildiz itself.

Besides the general barrack garrison in and about the Palace, there is a special swarm of guards, mostly Albanians, watching every door and gate inside. These are especially chosen for strength and reckless courage, and are kept in good temper and *soi-disant* fidelity by continual presents and petting. It seems, however, clear that if ever the evil moment arrives, it will be one of these

mercenaries who fear neither God, man, nor the devil who will deal the blow, since as they are faithful to watch and guard for money, they can be bought to betray and kill by a greater offer.

The risk from personal vengeance is comparatively slight, for though the most fearful crimes are almost daily perpetrated by order, and with the countenance of the Palace, the Moslem in general does not hold the Caliph responsible, or even if he does so, would hesitate to raise his hand against Zil-Ullah, the "Shadow of God." Should any such accident arrive, it would certainly occur either through some desperate Albanian, if a Moslem at all, or far more probably through a Macedonian Bulgar or Greek.

In thus reviewing the chances of the forcible expulsion of the Sultan from the scene, I would wish it to be understood that I am merely perpending the chances which have for long been the subject of daily conversation, and which for that very reason are, at least to my mind, growing more remote as the days pass. Personally, I doubt if any sudden disappearance of the central figure would cause a very great change in the general situation. It might and it might not; all would depend, firstly, on the moment when it occurred, and secondly, on the manner of its performance.

Supposing, for supposition's sake, that the Sultan were to die to-night of an apoplectic stroke, or any other visitation of God.[1] Unless an open revolution occurred which would bring about an instant occupation, probably by Russia of Constantinople, we should simply see the installation of Reshad Bey, and a continuation

[1] An army doctor I once knew was a very fine shot with a rifle, and withal a somewhat eccentric character. After serving in Cyprus for a while and in Egypt, he went to Australia, where he was appointed health officer at an out-station. One morning he was on the beach with his rifle, and saw some seals disporting about three hundred yards off. He drew a bead on one and fired, sending an attendant to pick the animal up. On reaching the spot, though, it was discovered that the supposed seal was a black man. A coroner's inquest was held, the marksman presiding, and the verdict was that the man had met his death "By the visitation of God."

for another twenty or thirty years of the same Palace régime—only, perhaps, with more unrestrained licence, owing to the weaker grasp of the new titular of the Caliphate.

For whatever we may say of Abdul Hamid, he is a strong man. I daresay there are some who will contest this, but anybody who knows anything about Turkey will bear me out. He has lost province after province—Egypt, Eastern Roumelia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Cyprus, and is about to lose Crete; but the chances are that any other Sultan would long since have lost Turkey. In spite of a disastrous war with Russia before he had fairly settled himself on his throne, he has managed to keep up his authority positively intact and absolute over every inch of land where he holds sway. He has always preferred to give up his sovereignty altogether rather than to have it tampered with. Of course in Eastern Roumelia and Cyprus, while accepting tribute, he has long since gracefully withdrawn. But wherever he keeps a Turkish Vali, the land must be Turkish. When the Cretan question became acute, he quickly accepted the inevitable, and agreed to the autonomy. The time may come when he or his successor will have to do the same for Macedonia and Armenia; but for either of these there will be a stiffer fight. As for Crete, it has always been a cancer on Turkey, and is no real loss. Macedonia is the last remaining European province politically, for Salonica and Adrianople are almost parts of Constantinople. At present almost half the available armed strength of Turkey is available for the defence of Macedonia, and it may be taken for granted that it will not be ceded without a most stubborn contest. The "lopping off" of Macedonia, which most of the Great Powers are exceedingly anxious to see, would be the death-knell of Turkey as a European Power; and when once the Sultan has to retire into Asia, his days will be numbered.

In conclusion, one word or two on the policy of Europe, and especially England, towards the Sultan.

Has Europe in general any harmonious idea as to

what it wishes for the future of Turkey? After nearly twenty years of tolerably close observation of its action, I have failed to discover such, and if any exists, it would be a very good thing both for Europe and for Turkey, and for the population, Moslem and Christian, under the Sultan's rule, if the representatives of the Powers would embody it in a solemn Convention. Up to now there have been periodical and spasmodic efforts at joint action to establish what are vaguely called "reforms" to apply to various portions of the empire, and schemes for these are drawn up in the most happy-go-lucky style, approved and pigeon-holed; whilst things go on as before until something unexpected occurs, and the whole situation is changed.

Either the Turkish Empire is to be maintained in its integrity, or it is to be dismembered. In its heart of hearts each Power expects and waits for the dismemberment, eagerly watching for the first signs so as to grab something for itself. I do not except England, though I honestly believe our policy is the most disinterested amongst the three or four greater Powers. Still, when the time comes, we shall certainly not be backward in claiming our share, and of late we have done nothing to put off that time—rather the contrary.

In the course of events I believe that the dismemberment is inevitable; but it will not take place without a death struggle. The question for us is whether to hasten that struggle or to put it off, as it undoubtedly rests with us to do. In the end, Russia and Austria will have to divide Turkey in Europe, with some of the Balkan nationalities to help them, and England will have to seek her compensation where and how she can. This might, however, very easily be deferred for another hundred years. I have already said earlier in this book that my own humble and possibly wrong idea is that England would do well to clear out of the Mediterranean, and let the other European Powers fight out their differences over the body of Turkey; but there is an alternative held by much wiser men than I. That is that we should support Turkey

against Russia. There is much to be said for this also; but if it is a good line, it ought to be taken up in earnest —not alluded to as a policy, and abandoned altogether in practice. For years past in the Bosphorus, the Power most hostile to Turkey has certainly been England, and we cannot expect to gain Turkish confidence by ceaselessly bullying her.

Recent events in China have shown that Russia is slowly enveloping us in the north and east, and it only remains now for her to come down upon Turkey, as she may do at any moment, and overrun Armenia, in order to obtain command of the Persian Gulf. We may well ask ourselves how we should like to see Russia and France masters of Asia Minor, with armies and railways reaching through Mesopotamia, and the Czar omnipotent over the whole of Northern Asia, with a port in China, and another on the Persian Gulf, thus embracing India in an enormous net.

The whole policy of Russia at Constantinople for years past has aimed at destroying our influence, which alone she fears; and our own policy seems to have been directed towards backing Russia up, and alienating the Porte and the Palace.

I am aware that the prevailing sentiment is that the Sultan is an "assassin" and a double-dyed villain, with whom our Government cannot shake hands; but the Sultan is not altogether Turkey. We are a great Moslem Power, with millions of Moslem subjects, face to face with a mighty and unscrupulous enemy, and we ought to make up our minds either to knit closer the ties with our old friends, or else to depart in peace and strengthen ourselves within our own borders. Our present policy of backing our enemy, and snubbing our possible bulwark against him, is neither fish, flesh, nor good red herring.

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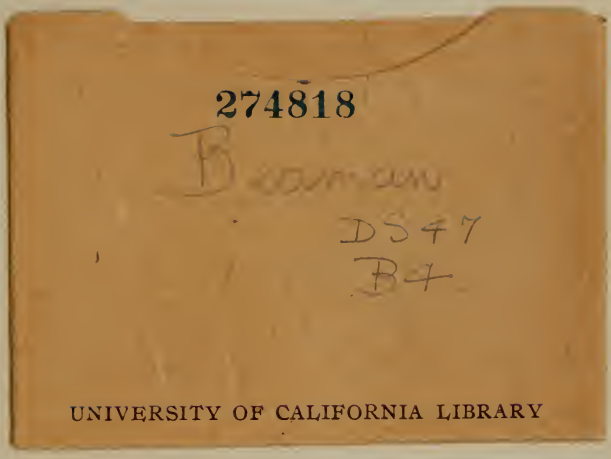
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